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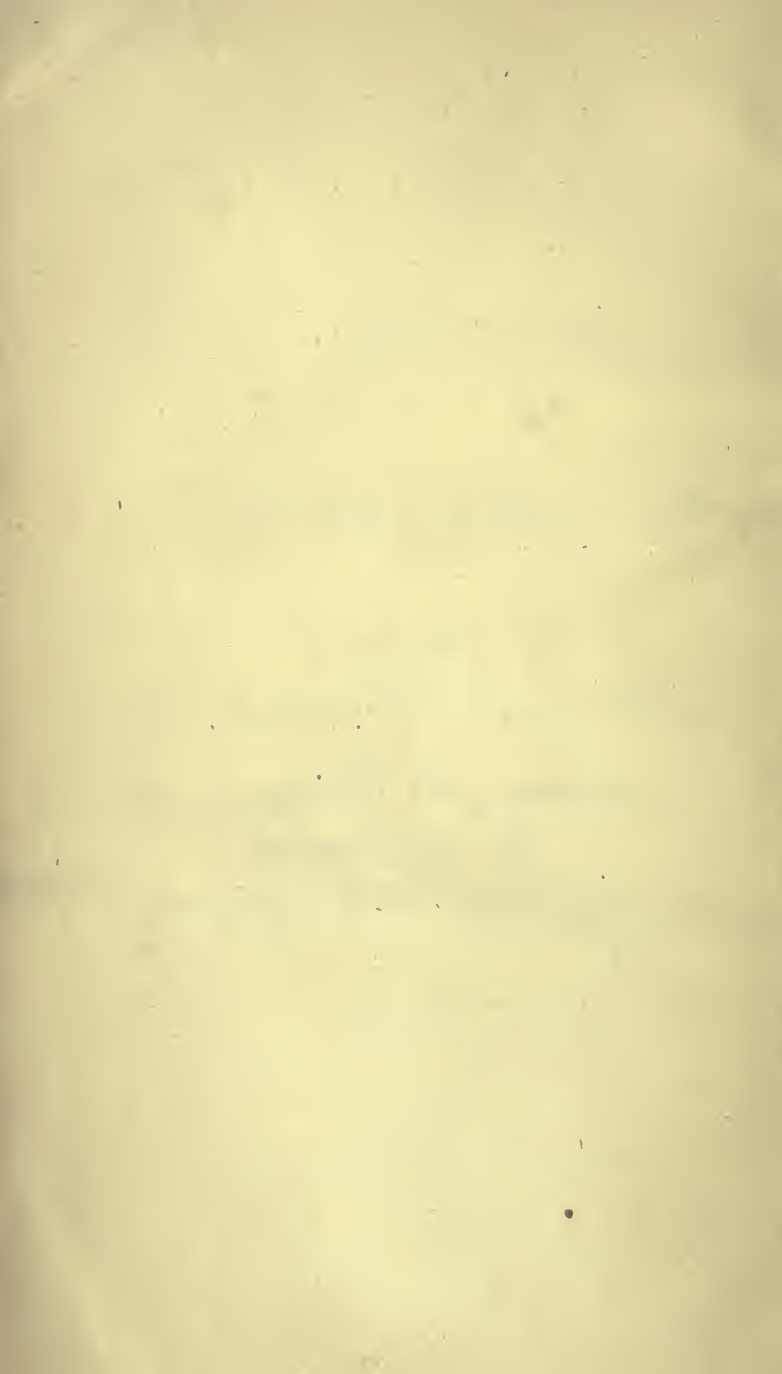
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# MEDITATIONS

ON

## THE LAST DAYS OF CHRIST;

TOGETHER WITH

### EIGHT MEDITATIONS

ON THE

### SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER OF JOHN.

BY

W. G. SCHAUFFLER,

MISSIONARY AT CONSTANTINOPLE.



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## P R E F A C E .

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SIXTEEN years ago I ventured to publish a few Meditations on the last days of Christ, which had been preached in the midst of plague and death, at this capital. Peculiar circumstances led to the attempt, aside from the fact that these sermons had not remained without a blessing when they were delivered, little as our congregations then were. Although they appeared in America under very unfavorable circumstances, and in an extremely humble garb, they were kindly received, and they seemed to meet the wants and feelings of the friends of Christ in other parts also. For several years past the little book has been out of print, while inquiries for it continued, to some extent, to be made. It was therefore thought justifiable to republish the work, after a revision. It was judged best, also, that a few sermons on a kindred subject should be added. Following this advice of some perhaps too partial friends, I made such changes in the sermons which had already been published as appeared to me necessary. I was, however, not willing to efface the impress which the peculiar circumstances under which they had been written and delivered, and my



feelings at that time, had given them. I preferred to leave many faults as they were, in order not to change the expression of those days. May I not hope for the further kind indulgence of the Christian reader in this respect? Many specimens of perfect pulpit composition are before the public, and their number is growing daily. May not the unpretending feelings of a mind spell-bound by a great and sacred subject be also permitted to speak, though they may not always find an appropriate utterance?

As to the eight Sermons on the 17th chapter of the Gospel of John, I have no other apology to offer for their publication than the subject itself, and perhaps the fact that some of my hearers thought favorably of them. Shall that chapter, *as a connected whole*, remain forever untouched, though given for our most devout and serious contemplation, because it is undoubtedly one of the most profound portions of scripture? Not being aware of the existence of any practical expositions on this chapter, I made the attempt. May it please God to bless the feeble effort! It is most particularly in such a case, when the contemplation of *such* truths as this chapter presents is attempted, that the power of God must be made in human weakness, both in the writer and in the reader.

W. G. S.

CONSTANTINOPLE, JULY, 1852.



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## I.

### CHRIST'S ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM.

On the next day, much people that were coming to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna : Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon ; as it is written, Fear not, Daughter of Zion : behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. These things understood not his disciples at the first : but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him. The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing ? behold, the world is gone after him.—JOHN 12 : 12—19. Compare MATTHEW 21 : 1—11 ; MARK 11 : 1—11 ; LUKE 19 : 29—44.

WITH the leave of Divine Providence, I have purposed, partly for my own instruction and edification, to deliver a course of sermons upon the last days of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth, commencing with his solemn entrance into Jerusalem, as it is set forth in the portions of Scripture which I have chosen for the text of this discourse. Nor will this be done without the edification of those who may hear me, provided divine assistance is vouchsafed to me, to give me an insight into the portions of Holy Writ which I may be called to handle, and to open the eyes of my understanding,

that I may see "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord."

I have formed this purpose for my *instruction*, I say; because there are various difficulties of different kinds attending this part of the history of Christ. These I shall endeavor to clear away by an exhibition of the events in their true order and connection, as they may appear after a careful examination of the harmony of the four evangelists, and by such other observations as may tend to throw light upon the sacred text. I have made it for my *edification*, because I am convinced that, unless I am altogether deserted from above,—which may God in mercy avert!—such scenes as shall come before me cannot be contemplated without serious spiritual enjoyment and advantage. May it please Him, with whom is the residue of the Spirit, who himself is the living fountain, and in whose light alone we can see light, to give me such help, such insight and enjoyment, in this my undertaking, as will show that it remains still true what his servant of old said of Him,—“He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.” Is. 40th chap.

Such is the interest thrown around the various scenes in the field of contemplation before me, that I hardly dare cast forward my looks, lest I should faint and relinquish my task, as incapable even of the slightest approximation; lest, forgetting that the power of God is made perfect in weakness, I should exclaim, with Peter, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”



There it lies, the whole vast picture,—rich, various, an unique combination of all that is just, good, holy, heavenly, divine, on the one hand; and all that is black, disgusting and diabolical, on the other;—the most interesting part of the most interesting history of our globe, from the beginning to the end of time,—the revealed light of heaven mingling in contest with the smoke of the bottomless pit; divine love and forbearance and infernal hatred and outrage in close encounter,—Heaven on the one side, hell on the other, and a wicked perishing world in the centre,—the Lamb of God on the accursed tree; here a dying, penitent sinner; there an expiring, cursing wretch; believers dispersing, doubting, denying, swearing, repenting, weeping, recovering; high treason committed, and punished with unavailing sorrows and everlasting burnings; the world and hell in a shout of triumph, because heaven is defeated and its hero slain; the everlasting interests of a world at stake, and involved in impenetrable gloom for thirty-six hours; the heavens darkened, and the earth convulsed and shook out of her place; and, as the catastrophe of the whole, the armies of hell routed, the main power of Satan broken, a divine dispensation closed forever; Christ reigning victorious; a new irrevocable covenant between God and repenting sinners established; songs of triumph in heaven; the everlasting kingdom of our God and of his Christ commenced upon earth; and between these leading facts numerous collateral circumstances, but even these, like stars of minor magnitude, each still a world by itself. This is the sketch; these are the elements of the story before me, upon all of which to touch, even in the most protracted course of sermons, would be counting the stars,—an awful, fearful, delightful view!

But I must not indulge, for my own discouragement, in

anticipations like these. I have chosen a text,—I owe you an explanation of it, and it shall be deferred no longer. It was not without hesitation that I chose the first text and subject of my contemplated series of discourses. There are various points in the history of our Lord which seemed almost to have equal claims with this. After all, however, my text struck me as being especially prominent, because it is the first public step which Christ took to show his character, to meet his last trials, and to finish the work which his heavenly Father had given him to do on earth.

We shall, at this time, contemplate more particularly,

I. CHRIST SETTING OUT ON HIS TRIUMPHANT ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM.

II. THE REJOICING DISCIPLES.

III. THE WILLING PEOPLE.

IV. THE GAINSAYING PHARISEES.

V. JESUS' TEARS.

I. It was towards the close of our Lord's ministry on earth that the exasperation of the most influential among the Pharisees, the Scribes, and the elders of the Jews, rose to such a height as to render Jerusalem no longer a safe abode for him. The resurrection of Lazarus from the grave had filled the measure of their rage, and satisfied their minds that nothing short of the violent death of their formidable adversary could answer their purpose, and liberate them from the fearful apprehensions with which his growing popularity began to fill their bosoms. Down with him! So it echoed from mouth to mouth. Down with the Sabbath-breaker, the despiser of our venerable, sacred traditions, who dares to oppose council, sanhedrim and high-priests, and to foil them by his continual troublesome appeals "to the law and to the testimony." Down with him! though he cleanse all the

lepers, heal all the sick, raise all the dead, comfort all the afflicted, feed all the poor, and save all the perishing souls from Dan to Beersheba. Down with him ! for it is better that he and all the poor and sick perish throughout the land, than that our synagogue establishment should suffer, our craft get into disrepute, and our income cease.

On this account, when Christ returned for the last time to Jerusalem, his hour being not yet come, he stopped for some time at Ephraim, a city, or rather an obscure town, probably but a few miles north-east from Jerusalem, on the borders of the desert of Judah. (John 11 : 59.) Six days, that is, as chronologists would have it, the Sabbath or Saturday before the passover, he came up from Ephraim to Bethany, where Lazarus and his sister lived, to attend a supper, which seems to have been prepared for him in particular, and where Lazarus was one of the guests; Martha served, and Mary anointed Christ with precious ointment, while he was reclining at the table. This is doubtless the same supper with that of which we read in Matthew 26, and Mark 14, where Simon the leper is mentioned as the host. The apparent discrepancy between John and the two evangelists last alluded to admits of such an easy and satisfactory solution, that it is astonishing how men of sense could ever have thought of two distinct suppers at Bethany,—one before and one after the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem; at each of which Christ had been anointed by a woman; at each of which his disciples had rebuked the person urging the same plea for the poor and receiving the same answer from Christ, other obvious coincidences not to mention. That Matthew and Mark mention the supper *after* the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem, while John introduces it as occupying the day before, will not appear strange, if we consider that Matthew

does not aim at chronological order, but relates his facts upon the principle of some moral symmetry which he has in view. Mark frequently follows the same method, from the same consideration. An attentive reading of these two evangelists will satisfy any one on the subject. All the objections which have been urged against the identity of these two suppers are too trifling almost to deserve a refutation. One evangelist says that the woman anointed the *feet* of Christ, and the other that she anointed his *head*. And the easy reply is, that both are right, that neither denies what the other asserts, and that both the head and the feet of Christ were anointed. Either was the practice on such occasions, as we may safely infer from Luke 7 : 46. There Christ says to the Pharisee in whose house he sat down to meat, and where also he was anointed by a woman of unhappy notoriety,\* “Mine *head* with oil thou didst not anoint, but this woman has anointed my *feet* with ointment.” And as this and the transposition of the narrative are the only differences between the evangelists, I maintain that John, Matthew and Mark, refer to the same supper, in which John keeps the order of time, and, after having related this occurrence in its proper place, he goes on to state that on the next day after the supper in Simon’s house our Lord set out publicly to enter the royal city.

He set out from Bethany. Matthew makes the impression that he obtained his animal from Bethphage. These two places were both situated on the east of the Mount of Olives, north-east from Jerusalem; and they were so near to each other that Christ may have sent to Bethphage after having set out, himself, on foot from Bethany,—he, perhaps, passing up the Mount of Olives with the people, while some of his disciples

\* Not Mary Magdalene, as some think ; her name is unknown.



procured the animal. This latter appears to have been borrowed from a couple of men well inclined towards our Lord; for otherwise the commission of Christ, as well as the owners' readiness to comply as soon as they heard that "the Lord had need" of the creature, could not well be explained.

The ass is brought, and Christ proceeds up the ascent, accompanied by a crowd of disciples, and a large number of people from abroad, who were come to the approaching feast, and who had visited Bethany to see Lazarus after his miraculous resurrection, glorifying God for all these displays of his power. As they approach the top of the mountain, the prospect widens; and what the weakness of the bodily senses cannot reach or discern, the charm of an imagination well acquainted with the sacred relics of the Holy Land would, in the twinkling of an eye, gather within the compass of their horizon. In front there lies the "mountain of the Lord's house," crowned with the royal city,—the only, exclusive, earthly dwelling-place of the Most High. On the west the great sea, whose mighty ships are one day, and perhaps soon, to bring back the dispersed of Israel from the four winds of heaven, and whose remotest islands and shores are, ere long, to stretch out their hands unto Jehovah. Did one of the company chance to look back, there was Jordan, the witness of divine power when Israel passed through it dry-shod, to take possession of the promised land; and the Dead Sea, the emblem of God's wrath over all the incorrigible enemies of his word and work. On the south there lay the birth-place of Him "whose goings forth are from old, from everlasting;" and dear Hebron, of sacred memory, was also near, the dwelling-place of Abraham, the father of the faithful. It was a wonderful, soul-inspiring panorama of sacred places, witnesses of divine revelations, of mercies, judgments and wonders, past

numbering. And, what completed the sacred enthusiasm of the pious company, in the midst of them was riding, upon an ass-colt, a mysterious man, with unassuming plainness, heaven in his countenance, of whose love and miraculous power the land was ringing again, and whose every step, word, look and turn, was but a new proof that he moved in a more than human sphere. What wonder, then, if their feelings were enlarged, their hopes raised high, and their hearts filled with joy to overflowing? They look at him again. Is he not the promised peaceful King of God's people? Yes, it is he! He it is,—or no one ever comes! They tear branches from the trees, and throw them into the way, as marks of their reverence and joy; they mind not their garments—they spread them out into the dust, and, as he rides away over them, they burst forth into a song, Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest—according as it is written, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold! thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.”

II. But we must not overlook with whom the joy of our happy company to-day originated. This we learn from the evangelist Luke. “And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen.” This main object of the triumphal march is now obtained. *The disciples* are now all convinced and sure the Messiah is among them. And (mark this), they see in him not the *worldly* conqueror, bent on revenge and slaughter, but the peaceful Lord, the deliverer from all evil, the spiritual and

everlasting King, whose kingdom is not of this world in the usual sense of the term. Their hearts overflow; they can refrain no longer; their feelings want utterance, and they burst forth,—not into a wild cry of war and bloodshed, not into threatenings and imprecations against their enemies, nor into flattering encomiums of their new king, but into a sacred song of praise and prayer, in which angels might well have joined: “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest! Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, which cometh in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!” That their frame of mind was at least not altogether different from what our Lord wished it to be, is clear from the fact that he *indulged* and *encouraged* them himself. On other similar occasions he had withdrawn and hid himself when the people endeavored to proclaim him Messiah, because *then* their minds were wholly unprepared, and their motives and expectations low and carnal. *Now*, seeing them in some measure prepared to enter into his views, he gives them occasion, himself, for doing so, by the most forcible allusion possible to the well-known prophecy in Zechariah, 9th chapter.

To see Christ exalted and glorified is the chief delight of every true believer, and the ultimate object of all his prayers and efforts. To see him forgotten, neglected and despised, mingles wormwood in the cup of his joy, and would make existence itself burdensome to him at last. But Christ is glorified and honored in the highest possible degree, when he can enter as the prince of life and peace, here into a heart, there into a family, a church and congregation, a city, or a land, and pour his rich and precious blessings freely over them. And hence his true friends are never happier than



when they are permitted to precede and to follow him in his march, with the voice of rejoicing and triumph, when they see the people "willing in the day of his power," flocking to him "as clouds and as doves to their windows." They delight to be the helpers of the young convert's first love and first joy. They remember the time when they themselves were sitting in darkness; when the awakened conscience poured its thunders into their guilty souls; when they wished to pray, but had no heart to it; when they wanted to "flee from the wrath to come," but their feet seemed to be riveted to the ground; when they wished to make themselves better by good works, but grew worse every minute; when the heavens above them were as black as pitch, and as impenetrable as brass; when they longed to turn back to naught, but found themselves shut into existence by everlasting bars, and doomed to eternal consciousness by the decree of him who changeth not, though heaven and earth pass away; when they wanted to curse the day of their birth, but, feeling the guilt to be theirs, durst not indulge even that miserable gratification, and went away, broken-hearted, into the remotest corner, and sat down and wept sore and long. But while they are weeping, all at once, behold! a ray of light breaks through the darkness of their souls. Harken! a voice comes from above,—and O, the blessed message! "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just and having salvation." And they, shedding tears of joy, reply: "Hosanna to the Son of David, who cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" They remember all this, I say, and they know that it is the appropriate glory of Christ, and his highest desire and delight, so to appear to perishing sinners when all else have forsaken them. They

want that he should be filled with the travail of his soul and be satisfied. Nor can they rest easy until their consciences bear them witness that they are doing all they can to prepare his way, and that they are continually praying for his coming.

III. The *disciples* have no sooner tuned their voices to the sacred song, than the *people* join them,—a delightful chorus. They cut branches from the surrounding trees, and spread them into the way ; they spare not their very garments. A foretaste of celestial joy absorbs every other thought throughout the whole company. This is the regular course of things. When *Christians* wake up, the *people* rejoice ; while *Christians* slumber, the *people* will continue in the road to death. Exceptions to this rule are rare.

It is delightful to see the people *willing* in the day of God's power, crowding around Christ. But there is still a thought which not unfrequently casts a cloud over the scene. They are *willing* ; but O that they were *determined* to serve Christ ! Not your *garments* he wants, but your *hearts* ! Not your willingness to rejoice in his light ; your fixed immovable purpose to be his forever. This is what he wants, and what alone will make Christians of you, and save you. Nor is the distance between a *willingness* to be a Christian and a *determination* to be one trifling. It is enormous ! Angels cannot tell the number of those who perished, with all the *willingness* in the world to be saved, simply because *firmness of purpose* was wanting.

I will do no wrong to our willing people to-day. I do not believe, as many do, that this body of men, who are now singing hosanna, were the very same ones who, a few days after, roared out, "Crucify him ! crucify him !" Ours is a company of strangers, who came to the feast ; and, having heard of Lazarus' resurrection from the grave, went out to

see him, and rejoiced, and glorified God. They are well-disposed people; and being strangers, and dispersed in the large city among friends and acquaintances, they could hardly have received information of what was going on in that darkest of all nights, when Christ was betrayed and condemned to death. And the first word which probably most of them heard of it was, that the young Rabbi was condemned to death, and just hurrying to the place of execution. But the clamorous crowd before Pilate's door was chiefly from the mob of Jerusalem, well known, and in their interests wedded to the High Priests and Pharisees; and they were probably called together by some special effort of these ecclesiastical dignitaries. For these cautious assassins expressly said, "Not on the feast-day, lest there be an uproar among the people;" and they pressed on all the night to accomplish their purpose, with the most unheard-of anxiety and vigor.

Still, there were, doubtless, among our *willing* people, many with whom the divine word and divine joys fell into stony ground, and having not root, withered in the time of offence and persecution. There were those whose hearts had begun to be overrun with the thorns and briers of worldly cares and plans, or were becoming hard, like the broad highway of honor, wealth and pleasure, "which leadeth unto death." Now they rejoice, and are nigh to the kingdom of heaven; they are willing. But many of them wanting depth, singleness of purpose, and determination, they soon faint, and give it all up again; and this day of high religious privilege, instead of becoming a blessing to them, will prove a curse and a condemnation forever. However, *some* of our happy company to-day, who, perhaps, never before had sung hosanna to the Son of David, are doubtless now singing his



nobler prize in the world above. May the number of such be great! And may we learn of them the value of an unpurged, plain good sense, and of openness to the truth, which often prepare the way of Christ in our hearts; while artificial minds, thrown out of balance by an over-stock of earth-born knowledge, such as we shall meet with under the next head are sure to meet with the doom of reprobation.

IV. No class of men, it seems, followed Christ more perseveringly in his ministrations than the Pharisees. Where he is, there they are also. Even here, on the top of the solitary Mount of Olives, they are present, with no profit or pleasure, either to themselves or to anybody else. Methinks I can see them standing on some elevation along the road, to see the favoured, uninstructed people pass by, while they wisely shake their heads at their extravagance. They affect to despise those who accompany Christ, and yet they are again and again anxious for their perishing cause, and say to one another, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him." And when they hear the people bursting out into hosannas, they can contain themselves no longer, but, addressing Christ while he is passing by, they exclaim, "Master, rebuke thy disciples;" to which Christ replies, "I tell you that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out!"

The Pharisees do not appear here, as in other instances, in the character of self-righteous men in *particular*, for this besetting sin of theirs was not especially called into exercise in the present instance. They appear to me to act simply as a set of distant, cold-hearted men, whose deep-rooted prejudices did not permit them to sympathize with the feelings of the people who surrounded Christ. The Pharisees were a studious class of men, who had enough to do to master the

enormous mass of their traditions, some of which are by no means destitute of interest. Their heads were well stored with such knowledge as their age afforded, and their hearts enjoyed a degree of self-confidence far outstripping the extent of their mental acquisitions, as is usually the case with learned men who are destitute of true religion. They *had* everything, and *knew* everything, and were quite prepared to master all the world, while they themselves had no idea of making any new experience, or admitting any truth which they could not draw from their own fountain.

There is an unhappy and spoiled class of studious and cultivated men, called literary, who, by an undue and disproportioned cultivation of the *intellect*, have so far chilled every affection of the *heart*, as to be unwilling, and at last naturally *unable*, to go with their feelings one inch further than the most common relations of life would necessarily carry a man. For the other world and its realities they have *sylogisms* enough, but no *affections*. In *speculating* on these things, they will go with any one to any length to which their powers can stretch; and they will be delighted with the most hair-splitting and unpractical sophisms on the subjects of *God*, *eternity*, *immortality*, *personal identity*, *moral accountability*, etc. etc. But as for *feeling*, they are the very last men. Repentance? — Ah! that will do for vicious people. Faith? — O yes! for the illiterate, who are groping in the darkness of vulgar ignorance, faith is necessary indeed, and a very excellent thing to keep them steady. But for such men as we! — Regeneration, communion with God and heavenly things, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost! O, intolerable mysticism! And what makes the condemnation of these ruined men the surer is, that they are usually *moral people*. Close habits of study and severe application are utterly



inconsistent with sensual indulgences, and in all common cases preclude immoral and licentious habits. Hence they are fully satisfied that they are right, and every idea which they cannot reach with their philosophy is folly, every exercise of devotion which does not grow in the sandy desert of their own experience is fanaticism, and every religious feeling which they do not find in the ice-house of their unfeeling hearts is nonsense and extravagance. They have built up for themselves a system; and because that system is *harmonious with itself*, they most vainly and unphilosophically suppose that it must needs be *true too*; and thus they confidently *venture* their souls and all eternity upon it. But it is one thing for a theory to be *consistent*, and quite another thing to be *true*. And if it should turn out to be fact, that their theory is *false*, and *that* of the Bible true (and their own philosophy recognizes this tremendous possibility), they are undone forever! But they have no idea they can be wrong. In times of religious excitement they smile, they wonder, and gainsay, and perish; and if Christ himself were present, they would have no hesitation to pass their sage sentence upon his character, superciliously to reprove his conduct, and to teach him how to wield and manage the helm of the church. They wish for no teaching from above; they shut themselves out from the privilege of any new spiritual experiences, and make themselves voluntarily a kind of intellectual brute beast, unfit for that sanctuary above, where "Holiness to the Lord" is written upon every vessel, and where nothing but the absolute perfection which Christ possesses and bestows has currency and value.

V. "And when he was come near, he beheld the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!

but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation."

They had probably passed the brook of Cedron by this time, and began to ascend towards the gate next to the temple, to which, on account of the utter confusion that reigns on the subject of the order in which the gates of ancient Jerusalem should be located, I dare assign no particular name. Nor is this of any consequence. They are now about entering the city. The road begins to be crowded; the buzz of the multitude, partly natives of Jerusalem, and partly strangers, who were present on account of the approaching feast, all thronging the streets and the gates, now breaks upon the ear. What could be more apt to remind Christ of that period when Jerusalem, crowded *to overflowing*, would become the theatre of wars, intestine and foreign, civil and religious; of famine, disease, fire, theft, highway robbery, assassination, cannibalism, treason, revenge, despair and blasphemy, and at last of utter destruction, so as actually to admit of no parallel, either in sacred or profane history! The very preparation of the people for a *holy season*, the *cheerfulness* and the high flow of spirits they indulged in, must have deepened the gloom of the dismal picture presented to his mind.

He looked up to the unhappy city, whose last ray of glory was now about to be extinguished, which was herself just sealing her doom by neglecting the time of her last visitation of mercy. He looked up, and wept. How eminently he was the master of his emotions and his tears, and how sparing

with the latter, we have more proofs than we need in his history. The sight of Gethsemane, as he passed it a few minutes before, drew no tear from his eyes; the sight of Jerusalem breaks his heart. In the presence of a gazing multitude, a flood of tears rolls down his cheeks, and out of the abundance of his tender heart his mouth speaketh, overflowing with sentiments of compassion. The sins of this rebellious and untoward generation, "stiff-necked and uncircumcised in hearts and ears," though they reached to the very heavens, seemed to be forgotten; their approaching ruin is all he can now realize. They are ready to murder him; but O! how can his heart bear to dwell on his *own sufferings*, when the gathering storm of hail, mingled with fire, prepares to pour upon his guilty people? Ah! to suffer is dreadful, but to suffer *guilty, infinitely guilty*, as they did, is to have a foretaste of the terrors of the reprobate souls of the damned.

When I think of the moment when he burst out into weeping, his eyes uplifted, suffused with tears, tears rolling down his countenance unrestrained, trickling down upon his garments,—when I read his words, and think of the thrill of his faltering voice, of the workings of his heart, and the heavings of his breast,—and then converge all the other circumstances to one point to form a perfect image of that love, and then to draw it,—my pen drops from my hand, I dare not approach the task. To pull off my shoes on this holy ground is not enough; I want to be meditating with my face pressed down into the deepest dust.

He wept over the woes of a *single city*: and do you think that he never wept over the woes of a *world*? He wept in public, where he would certainly restrain his feelings as much as possible; and do you think he never wept in secret?



Could we lift the sacred veil of his solitary hours; of his seasons of retirement, while an obscure workman of Nazareth; of his forty days of fasting and prayer in the wilderness; of his vigils on the mountain tops and in the deserts,— what prayers, what intercessions, what tears, what tender and heavenly sympathies with the sorrows and woes of humanity, would come to light! His affections were not limited to Judea; he did not love those merely who loved him. He wept at the grave of Lazarus, and over the distress of Martha and Mary; and why not over the great congregation of the dead of more than a hundred and thirty generations past, and over all the broken hearts of widows and starving orphans from the beginning of the world? Why not over the distress of all the sick, the delirium of the deranged, the agonies of the dying? Do you now see why he went about with restless assiduity to console, to comfort, to bind up broken hearts, raising the dead, curing and cleansing and restoring men to the enjoyment of health, sight, hearing and reason? How could he do otherwise, with a heart like his? He would have done so, though no man had believed in him on that account, or returned to him a grateful word or look.

But, if he wept over the *miseries* of Jerusalem, much more must he have mourned over their *impenitence*. “If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!” Indeed, *this* was the sole cause of their ultimate ruin. He says expressly that all these horrors would overtake them, “because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.” The measure of their guilt was fast filling up; the disregarded tears and entreaties of Christ sealed their doom; and from the time of his death to the sacking of Jerusalem and the dissolution of the state, they went down with frightful rapidity, and there was none to

deliver. Like a rock that has long been projecting on some lofty mountain top, but now rolls down through the wild forest, and over opposing hills, fences and dwellings, every obstacle adding strength to its restless precipitation, until it has reached the bottom of the unvisited gulf, or the deep sea below, leaving nothing behind save the forcible illustration of that swift destruction which overtakes "wickedness in high places."

Have you never seen the starving wretch, who, with unusual skill, information and enterprise, sails through seas, and roams, like the evil spirit in Job, up and down in the earth, attempting everything, and whose whole life is but one unbroken chain of failures, until, shivering with cold and half naked, he begs at the door of the ignorant but godly farmer, whom formerly he would have disdained to have set with the dogs of his flock? Who is he? "Lo, this is the man," says David, "that made not God his strength." In nine cases out of ten, a secret curse will be found cleaving to his fugitive heels; the tears of a pious mother, or a deserted godly wife, are burning upon his soul; the dying groans of seduced, unwary youths, of ruined innocence, and the sighs and sorrows of decrepit, starving, degraded parents, give him no rest, — the curse of God has become his inseparable shadow, and the very atmosphere in which he lives and moves. Every cheerful sunbeam seems to disclose his hidden crimes, every growling thunder to utter the sentence of his deeds of darkness. But, with all this, he may repent, return and live, if he has never heard the voice of Christ, — if he never knew him; and he is unspeakably happier than that undone, forlorn soul, who neglected the day of heavenly visitation, upon whom the tears of a *despised Saviour* rest with insufferable weight, and who, reprobate, and given over like Judas,

“chooses strangling rather than life,” and the reality of eternal ruin rather than its dreadful anticipation. O! it is terrible to fall into the hand of the living God! Search us, O God, and know our hearts; try us, and know our thoughts; and see if there be any evil way in us; and lead us in the way which is everlasting.

“And when Jesus was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.” “And Jesus entered into the temple; and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the even-tide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.”

Here finishes the account of our Lord's entrance into Jerusalem. May God grant his blessing upon this imperfect meditation, and may Jesus enter into the heart of each one of us! AMEN.

## II.

“ FATHER, GLORIFY THY NAME.”

And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast. The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh, and telleth Andrew ; and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone ; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me ; and where I am, there shall also my servant be ; if any man serve me, him will my Father honor. Now is my soul troubled ; and what shall I say ? Father, save me from this hour : but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered : others said an angel spake to him. Jesus answered, and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world ; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. — JOHN 12 : 20—32.

THE fact that the Evangelist St. John introduced the occurrence related in our text immediately after the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem, seems to indicate that it happened very soon after it,—probably the day following. The scene of our text was, in my opinion, the temple itself, where our Lord seems to have spent most of the time during what we



should call Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, of the last week of his earthly career. According to St. Luke, "He taught the people in the temple and preached the Gospel" in "those days." "The blind and the lame came to him into the temple and he healed them," says Matthew; and "the Chief Priests and Scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David!" A very considerable number of parables, of controversial dialogues, and of hortatory addresses, all delivered in the temple, fell within these few laborious days of our Lord's life; and were we to treat upon them all separately, our series of discourses would necessarily be extended to a most immoderate length. But, having purposed to confine ourselves to what our Lord *did* and *suffered* in those days, we shall not be chargeable with inconsistency, if we leave the explanation and application of what he *said* to others, or defer it to some future season.

The event in our text falls properly into the sphere of our meditations, although it does consist in a great degree of *sentiments uttered* by our Lord. I shall bring it into consideration as an *event*. And if the remarks which our Saviour made on the occasion attract our devout consideration, it will be remembered that they are an important part of the occurrence itself, and unquestionably of the most unrivalled beauty and importance.

I shall not, as I am in the habit of doing, divide the present discourse into several heads, for fear the spirituality of my text might suffer through the confinement of rule and form. We shall pass over the text as it is, and stop at such places as afford peculiar scope for meditation.

It was, then, during one of those interesting seasons while Christ was teaching the people in the temple, and preaching



the Gospel, the people listening with undivided attention to his gracious words, the High Priests and Scribes standing aloof, pale with anxiety and indignation, and the children singing hosanna; it was during one of those few unequalled days, when the Saviour stood in the temple amid the poor, the blind, the deaf, the maimed, the halt, and the wretched of every description, healing, comforting, pouring health and life and joy around, though his own heart was groaning secretly with gloomier forebodings than man can conceive,—it was during one of those scenes of mingled and absorbing interest, that certain Greeks, among them that came up to worship at the feast, “came to Philip which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.” They accosted Philip, either because he happened to be most accessible to them in the crowd, or most likely because, he being a Galilean Jew, and hence conversant with Greeks, and favorably disposed towards them, they felt more confidence in him, if, indeed, they were not previously acquainted with him. They address this common Jew respectfully,—“Sir,”—and express their modest desire to “see Jesus” with truly beautiful and winning simplicity.

“Sir, we would see Jesus.”—How delightful! Should not one’s heart leap with joy at such a request? What Christian would not, in the midst of a thousand other pressing engagements, pay at once the most cheerful and undivided attention to such lovely, interesting inquiries? “Sir, we would see Jesus.”—Well done! The most blessed desire that ever sprang up in a mortal’s breast. O! if we could but hear this question addressed to us, this melancholy place with all its gathering storms, yea, the very wilderness of eternal ice, or eternal sand, would instantaneously bud and blossom as Carmel and as Sharon. You would see Jesus?—Good!

You shall see him ! would be the joyful echo of our hearts ; and as Philip runs forthwith to Andrew, and they both crowd their way further on to Jesus, to tell him of it, when he was in the very midst of preaching and healing, so would we communicate the glad tidings to each other. This man, that family, would see Jesus,—and with united hearts would we bring the blessed petition to the throne of his grace.

But ah ! a long and melancholy sigh heaves my bosom, and I cannot help it. Where are those inquirers ? where are they ? Who would see Jesus ? I must stop ; for if I proceed my remarks must instantly become personal. We turn to our Greeks.

It is delightful to observe the anxiety with which these *strangers* endeavor to seize the fleeting hour of peculiar religious privilege, and the modesty with which they request a *minute* of interrupted intercourse with the *despised* and *humble* Jesus. What shame and guilt does not their conduct reflect upon those who bear the honorable name of *Christians*, and who might enjoy the most *uninterrupted* and *peculiar familiarity* with the *exalted* and *glorified* Jesus, but who neglect nothing so much and so gladly as to see him in the closet, or to meet him and his people in the solemn assembly of his house ! *You* would rather not see Jesus, ye despisers of his love. You want no interview with him. But, depend upon it, you *will* have an interview with him ere long, when neither business nor pleasure, neither mountains nor rocks, will hide you from his heart-dissolving looks ; when neither the buzz and laughter of a crazy world, nor the sound of the viol and the timbrel in your feasts, will drown the thunder of his voice. Then you will see him, whether you “ would ” or not ; and he who now speaks in the harmonious accents of dying love to save you will utter the

sentence of your endless ruin in peals of thunder which will shake the frame-work of the universe.

According to the best critics, these Greeks were Greeks by birth, and not Hellenistic Jews, as some have supposed. They were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. They came *from far* to worship at Jerusalem, and humbly to seek the acquaintance of Christ, while High Priest, Pharisees, Scribes, and other Jews *at* Jerusalem, were standing coldly and proudly at a distance; yea, while they were in the very act of preparing for the blackest of all crimes ever committed under the sun; and while Judas was standing, perhaps, nearest to his Lord, with the very scheme of hell maturing in his breast.

External religious privileges are an earnest, either of uncommon glory and exaltation in heaven, or of uncommon condemnation and suffering in hell. Abraham saw the day of Christ, and rejoiced; and he rejoices now, and his joy will never cease. Balaam saw the day of Christ, and with an aggravated condemnation he went to receive the reward of iniquity. The higher the station, the deeper the fall. Man fell—into the slough of sin; Lucifer fell—into the “bottomless pit.” John, Peter, Nicodemus, Nathaniel, and others saw Christ,—and Annas saw him too, and Caiaphas, and Herod, and Pilate, and Judas; but the doom of the latter ones was enhanced by the privilege they had enjoyed more than human calculation can express. And what was true then is true still. Trust brings with it responsibility, and when betrayed it brings guilt; and many a savage, who knows no more of Christ than what he may have retained from a single sermon of some passing missionary, may get a place in the “temple not made with hands,” while thousands from the very heart of Christendom, with their heads full of

earth-born wisdom, and their hearts full of folly, with their neglected Bibles in their left and with "a lie" in their "right hand," will go down to the mansions of ever-growing wickedness and pain, whither Hope and Mercy never descend, and where pale Despair and raging Madness have fixed forever their red-hot thrones.

The modesty and anxiety of our inquiring Greeks would, under any other circumstances, have been the most favorable introduction to our Lord. But now it was too late,—for *private interviews*, at least, too late. That our Lord did *not* admit these Greeks, I infer from the circumstance that no mention is made of their introduction to him, and chiefly from verse 27, which contains such sentiments as he would hardly have addressed to strangers. Moreover, the whole strain of his remarks was too highly spiritual to suit the comprehension of the most sincere *beginners* in religion; and such, no doubt, our strangers were.

The time of familiar intercourse was fast passing away with our Lord; the work of his *ministry* was hastening to its close, to give room to his still higher office of *mediation* between God and man, through the sacrifice of himself in behalf of a fallen world.

As Philip and Andrew, therefore, bring the request of our strangers before Jesus, they receive substantially the following reply,—indirect, indeed, but equally profound and comprehensive in point of import. I cannot see these dear men, for "the hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified." My hardest and noblest work now begins,—that of redeeming love. I, who in the beginning spake, and it was; at the breath of whose mouth worlds, immense and countless to human sense and reason, started on their enormous revolutions with a rapidity which derides every stretch of thought;



around the lowest steps of whose throne stars and suns floated like the small "dust of the balance;" for the performance of whose sovereign pleasure the whole multitude of angels, powers, principalities and dominions, stood in humble readiness, each with holy emulation craving the privilege of my lowest service; I now shall *serve*, suffer and die, freely, compelled by nothing save my own choice, my own love for sinners. As in power, wisdom and justice, so in love I must, I will be first in heaven and on earth. I, clothed in human flesh, shall suffer the punishment due to a rebellious world. The Son of Man, the Son of God, will be glorified. He will be glorified in his *sufferings* and in his *death*, which will show his love supreme, will force the last intrenchment of Satan, and create, not a *material* and *finite* world from *nothing*, but a SPIRITUAL and EVERLASTING creation from FAR LESS than nothing,—from an enormous minus quantity of sin and corruption. The Son of Man shall be glorified *after his death*, when he shall resume, dressed in human nature, his omnipotence, and rule as Creator, Preserver and Redeemer.

"The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified" in the same mysterious way of previous death, in which all sublunary things pass on to life and being. Here there is no light without shade, no victory without conflict, no rest without labor, no satisfaction without want, no life without death. When the proud rejoicing lion is torn to pieces and rotten, then meat comes forth from the eater, and sweetness from the strong. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit;" and when the flesh of the just is mouldering in the cold grave, then his redeemed and sanctified soul, like the pure white lily from the moor, rises to bloom forever in the paradise of God. Let, therefore, these men mark the

following great truth, and it will be better for them than all the interviews which I would give them at present. "He that loveth his life shall lose it : and he that hateth his life shall keep it." "And if (they or) any (other) man will serve me, let him (and them) follow me." *Then they will* have an interview with me, though it be not now ; for "where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man will serve me, him will my Father honor."

"O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out !" O, the folly and madness of the world, who hunt after greatness, preferment, wealth and pleasure, in the sweat of their brow, and to the unavoidable ruin of their souls ! If the words of Christ be true, if the death of our own lusts and desires is the way to life, then they hunt for death, they hunt for eternal shame, poverty, and pain.

Thus far the reply of Christ to the Greeks of our text ; and what important practical lesson it did contain for the rest of the people about him *then*, and still *does* contain to all of us *now*, is too plain to need any further explanation.

Another scene opens. — Christ had no sooner given his answer, than he feels his mind drawn to the contemplation of his own future sufferings ; and, being accustomed to follow those inward hints which he knew to be from above, he does not suppress his rising emotions. The Father had decreed to give one more audible testimony to his beloved Son, and for this the way was now preparing. It may be his eye lighted upon Judas, or upon the Priests, Pharisees and Scribes, in their corner, and an association of ideas brought instantly before him the gathering storm of his approaching passion ; or, the admiring, rejoicing multitude, and the children singing

hosanna, reminded him, by way of contrast, of the contempt and hateful spite which would but too soon be poured upon him, and of the dreadful "Crucify! Crucify him!" which, shouted by a ruthless mob, would stun his hearing;—and fear and misgiving, natural to most untarnished humanity, fill his bosom. His feelings demand utterance, and he cannot and will not hide them. "Now is my soul troubled." The devout attention of this multitude, the songs of these innocent lambs of my dear flock, and the modest and interesting request of those godly strangers, are gratifying to me; but, O! I look but a step before me, and darkness darker than Egyptian night covers my path, and my very *soul* melts with fear. O, that that dreadful hour were past! But, what shall I say? Shall I plead exemption from it? Shall I wish to enjoy even the most *lawful* comfort, when, by denying it, the conquest over the prince of this world may be completed, the glory of my Father in heaven promoted, and this perishing world saved? Are not these very sufferings the great object of my coming in the flesh? Yes! "For this cause came I unto this hour." Then, let it come upon me; and let all my desires and wishes, however lawful and proper,—let all my own interests (for even pure human nature has some), let all my thoughts and feelings, be lost in the all-absorbing petition, "Father, glorify thy name!"

Thus Christ. — Ye, who have a sense for things heavenly and divine, behold and admire the working of a holy mind. Behold the logic of Heaven, and the most unexampled illustration of the moral sentiment which will never be sufficiently admired,—"It is more blessed to give than to receive." Shall we again consult our own interests? Can we, while this model of all perfection is before us on the pages of sacred history? We should be anything but Christians, if we could.



But we cannot — we *will* not. In all our ways and works we will confer, not with flesh and blood, but with the spirit of holiness and of love only. In the eyes of the world we may appear as losing our lives,—but we shall find them again unto life eternal.

The great object of our Lord's coming was the expiatory sacrifice necessary for the redemption of sinners. "For this cause came I unto this hour." By this the separating wall between God and the sinner is done away, and every believer's eternal interests secured. He who has begun the work of our redemption *for* us will complete it also *in* us; and the only and all-absorbing task of our lives is the delightful one of doing his will, and glorifying his name, out of gratitude for our soul's salvation. Doing this, we shall act in the spirit and from the principle of Jesus, in the elevated occurrence of our text. And for this cause he has acted as it were publicly, that we may behold him and admire and imitate his example. This is directly enjoined upon us by his apostles. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." "We have the mind of Christ," exclaims the same apostle. Every man whose ruling affections, whose prayers and actions, do not close in with the great petition of Christ, "Father, glorify thy name!" is no Christian; and his hope will prove a spider's web in the day when God shall take away his soul. This is the great dividing line between converted and unconverted men. No man can seek *two things supremely*. He that seeks himself supremely is an



unconverted man, and he that seeks the glory of God supremely is a converted man. It is clearer than noon-day: who can deny it?

“Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore that stood by and heard it said that it thundered; others said an angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.”

Nothing can be more insipid than the idle conjecture of some, that the voice spoken of in our text was thunder, which John, taking it for a sign of God's complacency with the petition of our Lord, interpreted as meaning, “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.” A refutation in form would be too gratuitous to be attempted here. I merely ask, Did God never manifest himself in a sensible manner? Shall we mock the very pages of the soberest history, not to say of Holy Writ? Was there a thunder-storm at the baptism of Christ, when a voice was heard down from heaven, saying, “This is my beloved Son”? Then the Holy Spirit, coming down visibly and *remaining* on Christ, was a flash of lightning,—was it? Was there a thunder-storm on Mount Tabor, when Christ had that memorable and protracted interview with Moses and Elijah, when his own garments and countenance were transformed, and shining, and when the testimony “This is my beloved Son” was repeated? Was there a thunder-storm in that bush on Mount Horeb, which Moses saw burning, yet unconsumed,—from which he heard *words*, to which words he replied, received back again answers, commands, promises, reproofs, and long enough to fill up the whole third and half of the fourth chapter of Exodus? Was there a thunder-storm on Sinai, when, under the most magnificent and terrific display of the divine presence, several millions of men,

women and children, most of them not favorably disposed, heard with their own ears the ten commandments, word after word, pouring down over the barren rocks like an ocean of sound, and rolling in towering billows over the lonely desert, with majestic and fearful reverberation, until their very souls were melted and their strength exhausted, and they compelled to exclaim, "Let us not hear again the voice of Jehovah our God, neither let us see this great fire any more, that we die not"? Was there a thunder-storm in the tabernacle at Shiloh, when God called four times, "Samuel, Samuel," and after the fourth time, when Samuel answered, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," communicated to him minutely the long train of punishments which were to overtake the house of Eli? Believe these idle conjectures who can. We find it both easier and more reasonable to believe the unexceptionable testimony of Scripture. If the doubts of "unreasonable and wicked men" must have such power of demonstration with some unsound or unfair minds, we deplore their condition, and prefer to believe "the witness of God." But there appear to be men who are really reprobate to the faith, and who cannot believe though one should rise from the dead; and upon whom nothing short of the unquenchable fire will fasten conviction. So some of the people in our text say it thundered,—it is no matter; this is nothing supernatural or particular; there may be a thunder-storm somewhere in the atmosphere. Others, more candid, said, "An angel spake to him."

Permit me a few remarks on the general subject of God's revelations to mankind. If it is of any consequence for man to know God, it may be expected of God, as of a benevolent and omnipotent Being, that he would leave nothing untried to *make* himself known to him, and that he would pour in light

unto men's minds by every door and window, cleft and opening, all over the frame of their sensitive, intellectual and moral nature,—only, of course, so as not to destroy their moral free agency. And so he has done. God has manifested himself to the *moral* nature of man by an uncontrollable conscience, which warns, rebukes, chastises, threatens with a future everlasting and righteous retribution; and sometimes, if not listened to and obeyed, drives men to despair,—thus commencing retribution already here. God has manifested himself to the *intellectual* nature of man, by impressing upon their minds the consciousness of his own existence in such a manner that, while they can find no syllogism to demonstrate it, they are equally unable to deny it, or to rid themselves of it in any way, and that, after ten thousand efforts of the first intellects, on either side of the question, they are compelled to lay down their *offensive* and *defensive* weapons at the steps of his sovereign throne, and to confess the idea of God is a first and universal truth, which needs no proof, and fears no refutation. But most men listen neither to *conscience* nor to *reason*. It was, therefore, necessary that God should manifest himself to their *senses* also. This he did, *first*, in the wonderful works of nature—in their magnitude, the regularity of their laws, their adaptation to innumerable reasonable and benevolent ends, and their constant preservation; and, secondly, in order to leave nothing untried which could be done without wholly abolishing the dispensation of *faith*, or destroying man's free agency, he manifested himself to their senses by *occasional extraordinary occurrences* in nature, or in the history of mankind,—occurrences not capable of being traced back to the ordinary laws of nature, or the common concatenation of events. And these extraordinary exhibitions of his existence



and power he showed forth in every part of creation, to impress us with the great truth that *he is*, and that he is *Lord of ALL*. If any one will take the trouble to collect and to class the miraculous displays of God's power during the times of the old and the new dispensation, all of which are well attested, he will obtain an imposing picture of miracles, extending to every part of creation, and the symmetry and rationality of which at once demonstrate the identity and the wisdom of the Author. Through thousands of years there comes down a chain of supernatural effects, wrought in the clear noon-day light, before friends and foes, and which exhibit themselves in rocks, in metals, in the earth, the water, the atmosphere; in fire, in plants, fishes, reptiles, birds, four-footed beasts; in men, in their bodies and their minds; in the luminaries of heaven; and which addressed themselves to the taste, smell, touch, sight and hearing, of all under whose observation they fell; and are now handed down to us, and will be handed down to the end of time, with such clear and strong evidence as would give them before any equitable bar of justice all the power of regular, unexceptionable and conclusive testimony; so that, if a man resists now, he must not only disregard the voice of conscience and the light of reason, but also, in reality, his five senses; that is, he must resist all the evidence which can be given him, from the very nature of his own constitution, and he must bid defiance to God in heaven to convince him by anything short of the irresistible arm of his omnipotence.

Yet this is no uncommon thing. Some of the people in our text say, "It thundered;" and the far greater part of Christendom, in reading in the books of nature, of history, of providence, and in the Bible, of the mercies and judgments of God, give themselves no more concern about them than



they would about the dying sound of some distant summer cloud. The harmony of creation and its countless blessings, the most destructive revolutions of nature, the overturning of kingdoms, the deliverance of countries, islands and nations, from the thralldom of heathenism, and their conversion to the Christian faith, individual conversions, and judgments in their own immediate vicinity, all leave the stupid infidelity of carnal men alike untouched. Unbelief cannot receive instruction, but only punishment. They hear neither Moses nor the prophets, neither Christ nor the apostles, neither conscience nor reason, nor the five senses, nor the voice of history,—nor would they believe if one of the dead should rise, nor would they if the very gates of eternity should be thrown open, and the boundless region of spirit pour upon their senses the whole mass of its unnumbered population. But it will not be so always. When they shall be with the “rich man” in the flames, and lift up their eyes, “being in torment,” *they will believe.*

Christ enters into no dispute with the Jews; but, after assuring them that this voice was nevertheless come for their sakes, that they might believe, he goes on to say, “Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”

Who “the prince of this world” is, may easily be gathered from John 14: 3, and 16: 11; 2 Cor. 4: 4; and Eph. 6: 12, &c. It is Satan, beyond reasonable dispute. About the meaning of his being “cast out” some latitude of opinion must be granted, as we have no means of ascertaining its precise import. My conviction is, that it has reference to some signal overturn of Satan’s power, occasioned by the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, by which fallen humanity was

brought nearer to God, and in some serious respects brought into comparative liberty from the influence and power of the evil one. I will not insist upon the somewhat doubtful subject of heathen oracles,—the utter silence of some, and the rapid decline of all, soon after the crucifixion of Christ. The fact is asserted by many church-fathers : Lucan, a heathen writer, laments the silence of the Delphic oracle,—the most famous, perhaps,—no more than thirty years after the death of our Lord ; and Plutarch wrote a whole book on the subject of dumb oracles, in which book he endeavors not to refute, but merely to account for, the cessation of oracular responses, and this by theories which do little honor to his penetration. Now, if Satan is engaged in ruining the souls of men, as the Bible unquestionably asserts, who can doubt that he had a hand in that great engine of deception, not only by natural, but also by supernatural means ? And if the cessation of a machine, at a time when it was most needed to keep up idolatry, cannot well be accounted for from facts and circumstances known, it certainly becomes considerably probable that the curtailing of Satan's power may have been its chief cause.

Very consonant with this would be another fact, upon which I should insist much more. I mean the cessation of demoniacal possessions after the death of Christ, which, at the time of his coming and before, were so numerous, and against the reality of which no valid argument has yet been advanced. Matthew speaks of the resurrection of many "saints which slept," who came out of their graves after the death of Christ, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many ; and Peter twice intimates (1 Peter 3 : 19, 20, and 4 : 6) that something took place then in the region of the dead, not unlike to the preaching of the Gospel here,

settling the eternal destinies of some souls, whose doom could not be fixed before that great period. All this leads to the supposition that a mighty revolution was produced by the Saviour's death in the world of spirits, Satan in a sense judged, and his power broken.

Unto us, however, it suffices to know, for the understanding of this passage, that by the cross of Christ the empire of Satan was overturned and will be overturning till He whose right it is shall rule from the rising to the setting sun. To us it suffices to know, that although the Gospel did not and does not enjoin the use of any carnal weapons,—although the systems of idolatry were, at the time of Christ and afterwards, guarded by the power and influence of emperors, kings and princes,—although its foul deformities were already then carefully covered by philosophers and hierarchs with the saintly veil of allegories and spiritualizing comments,—although its more intelligent votaries, feeling themselves rather unsafe in the decaying outworks of coarse polytheism, had made a dexterous retreat into the inner intrenchments of esoteric philosophies,—although every imaginable spring and wheel was put into requisition to keep up the cause and kingdom of Satan,—yet the simple story of the cross *did* overturn the whole stupendous fabric from the bottom, and made havoc of the arch-fiend's combined forces, both in the political and the literary world, until, in all places to which its voice extended, every idol was prostrated, and every strong-hold forced and razed to the ground. Heathen Rome, with its countless temples, fell, and great was the fall of it. Touched by the stone cut out without hands, the precipitation of its ruin was majestic and tremendous. Down it came, like a mountain of dust before the hurricane. Whilst its civil patrons gnashed their teeth, and



its apologists affected to smile at the tale of the Gospel which they could not refute, the chariot-wheels of the King of kings drove over their necks and put them to everlasting silence. And, ever since, the assaults of the adversaries to pull down the pretended Jewish superstition of this doctrine have rebounded upon them with double fury, while the cross of Christ has ever come forth from the contest like the sun from behind the impure smoke of angry volcanoes, and remains ever fresh in loveliness and strength, the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth.

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” As in general, so in particular, the doctrine of the cross is the most formidable weapon which can be used against the empire of darkness; for, in its nobler contest with the conscience and the sensibilities of man, it levels at the rebellious heart the most overcoming appeals which exist in the whole storehouse of moral suasion. There is a class of men possessed of independent minds, who have actually intrepidity enough to brave eternal retributions, and to bear up under the most terrific denunciations of the broken law of God. How their temper will hold out after death,—this is another question; but here it often does hold out. This is a trait of character by no means laudable,—for it is not courage, but madness; it is not manly independence, but rebellion against God. But still, it involves a degree of vigor and firmness, which, if they were better employed, would reflect much honor upon the character of their possessor, and tend to make him eminently useful. Now, if there be yet left in the heart of such a man a spark of sensibility, and if the Gospel be preached to him in all its freeness, the cross in all its beauty, and the love of Christ in



all its power, you may depend upon it he is overcome. Ashamed of himself, he will submit; he cannot, he would not, be *so base, so ungrateful*, as to spurn a love, an affection, a sacrifice, so free, so generous, so overcoming. He is a Christian from that moment, and will henceforward employ all his powers to stem the flood of wickedness which rolls over this earth, and use all the firmness and independence of his now sanctified character to exhibit before the world the example of a consistent and devout follower of Jesus Christ.

And now, beloved, is there one here to-day who “would see Jesus”? But why *one* only? Would we not *all* rather see him, dearly beloved? O that every heart might now respond to my question, *I* would see Jesus,—*I* would,—I must see Him! To all such I *should* answer, to all such I *do* answer back again, “We know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” Amen.



### III.

#### THE GREAT PASSOVER.

Then assembled together the Chief Priests, and the Scribes, and the Elders of the people, unto the palace of the High Priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty and kill him. But they said, Not on the feast-day, lest there be an uproar among the people.

Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the Chief Priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him. Now, the first day of the feast of unleavened-bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover. Now, when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of Man goeth, as it is written of him; but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink

henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives. — MATTHEW 26 : 3—5 ; 14—30. Compare MARK 14 : 1, 2—10—26 ; LUKE 22 : 1—30 ; JOHN 13.

YOU are aware I have omitted large portions of Scripture between our last text and the one of to-day, because they contained chiefly parables, &c. I shall endeavor to present to you a connected view of the scene now before us, which I think will of itself occupy all the time which can be allotted to this part of our worship. Being thus obliged to sacrifice that part of the sermon which is usually occupied by practical remarks, may it be given to each one of us, as we go along, to receive such impressions, and to gather such profit and enjoyment, as will meet our several spiritual necessities, and render this a blessed and comfortable season to our souls !

We commence with the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem. This was the history of Wednesday. The purification of the temple and the history of the barren fig-tree, together with a few parables and a number of occurrences, such as the healing of the sick, the hosannas of the children in the temple, the questions of the Herodians concerning the tribute of Cæsar, the controversy of the Pharisees about our Lord's authority in matters of worship and temple regulations, and the one of the Sadducees respecting the resurrection of the dead, etc., all of which we passed by because the historical elements in them are characteristic rather of our Lord's entire ministry than of his last days in particular,—these and like details, we observe, form the history of Monday and Tuesday. Wednesday came, and Christ, according to his custom, visited again the temple, passing from Bethany, his secret abode, over the Mount of Olives, and through the valley of the brook of Cedron, to the holy city. Wednesday was a memorable

day. He finds, as usual, the Pharisees and Scribes crowding the temple gates. Already the eternal condemnation of most of them, if not of all, had been sealed, and their hearts and minds left by the Holy Ghost to the unrestrained influences of the powers of darkness. Hence the fearful progress of their rage and revenge against God and his Anointed, and the acceleration of their doom. Forbearance was at an end. Christ, the Searcher of hearts, well discerned their case, and with unexampled severity bursts forth upon these reprobated men in that awful discourse which you find in the 23d chapter of Matthew. In this heart-searching, overwhelming address, which rolls along like liquid fire, and which in point of power and unmingled terror has not its equal, he lays open their most secret crimes, announces to them and their guilty nation the woes and miseries which had now become in the records of heaven their irrevocable and melancholy doom, and gives them thus a foretaste of judgment to come. This sermon closes his *public ministry*; it is the last he ever delivered. He began his ministry by speaking as never man spake; he closed it by speaking as man never will, never may speak, again.

He passes out from the temple, none daring to put his hand upon him. His disciples follow him in consternation of mind. His voice, ringing down through the high porches of the temple,—“O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, etc.”—“Behold, your house shall be left unto you desolate!”—this terrible voice—for it had never sounded so before—kept ringing in their ears, and melting their hearts. This “house,” this great temple,—is it really to be destroyed? Impossible! Insupportable thought! ah, they cannot bear, they cannot believe it. Christ, whose notice their thoughts



and feelings could not escape, as he passes through the court, turns towards them, and, as they gather about him, and endeavor to lead his mind to a consideration of the vastness and magnificence of the temple edifice, if, peradventure, that might move him to recall the sentence of destruction which he had just pronounced upon it, he repeats and confirms it still, and with that asseveration which cut off every ray of hope (Matt. 24: 1, 2). "Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down."

The minds of the disciples must necessarily have been deeply impressed with this absorbing subject. Now they could no longer doubt but that city and temple would one day experience an utter desolation. There was, however, no opportunity in the crowded temple courts to propose to their master any questions on the subject; and they follow him in silence, as he passes along out of the temple-gate, down \* the valley, and over the bridge of the Cedron, towards Bethany. This was his last return to that retired, humble spot, which had been, perhaps, his most endearing earthly home, and where, in all the region of Jerusalem, he had found the most faithful hearts, and the safest retreat from the cunning wiles of wicked men. As he mounted the western ascent of Mount Olivet, he sat down once more to look back upon the city of David, and the temple of Jehovah, and the land of prophets and patriarchs. Their glory was now departed; and church and state and land lay prostrate, like the lifeless corpse of a giant, to moulder away in quick and eternal dissolution.

The disciples now seized the favorable opportunity to propose their questions on the subject of Jerusalem's destruction, upon doing which they seem to have agreed by the way. Probably, owing to the literal construction of Is. 2, and Micah 4, or some other similar passage, they had cherished

the pleasing hope, that city and temple would stand, at least, until the judgment day, and the end of the present dispensation of nature. The coming of Christ to judgment and the close of his dispensation were thus naturally and necessarily identified in their minds with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. And as they had reason to believe that these great events would be preceded by some special external signs, they draw near to Christ, and propose to him the following three-fold question : "Tell us, when shall these things be,"—that is, when shall city and temple be overthrown ; — when shall be "thy coming and the end of the world ; — and what shall be the sign of all this." Matt. 25 : 3. To this three-fold question Christ answers in the 24th and 25th chapters of St. Matthew, by giving them a joint picture of both events, and their respective signs, leaving it to the different periods of fulfilment to separate and explain the different and mingled parts of the grand sketch. How well their seemingly confused presentation, which has to this very day eluded the scrutiny of unpractical speculation,—how well it was calculated for *practical* purposes, the history of Jerusalem's destruction itself shows, by informing us how a few hints contained in the 24th chapter of Matthew proved the salvation of the whole Christian church at Jerusalem. About an hour ago, Christ had closed his office as a *preacher* of the kingdom of heaven ; now he closes his *prophetic office*, and then proceeds to Bethany, to refresh his heart once more with his pious friends there, and to take his last night's rest upon earth. Those who pretend that Christ was, during this week, invited to two suppers at Bethany, and that he was twice anointed, etc., assign this evening to the supper in Simon's house. But it is easy to see how inconvenient for such a purpose this evening would have been to Simon, when the

festival was at hand; how likely he would have been to defer his invitation till at least Easter-day's evening; and especially how little disposed Christ would have been to spend his last evening at Bethany *in public*. They moreover split up the discourses of Christ contained in chapter 14—17 of St. John, assigning the 14th chapter to this evening, and the rest to the evening of the Passover at Jerusalem,—a separation which is intolerably hard and forced. I am satisfied Christ spent the remainder of Wednesday at home in Lazarus' house; and if the apostles had been permitted to write down what they pleased, we should really have reason to complain of them, that they, and especially John, did not preserve the conversation of this interesting season.

Proceeding to the history of Thursday, we shall endeavor to harmonize the four Evangelists in reference to its various events.

First, let us briefly consider the plain, connected history of the exit of Israel from Egypt, and of the institution of the Passover and the festival of unleavened bread. This is not only the best but the only key to the language of the Evangelists on the subject of our Meditation, and it will make plain and easy what has occasioned so much confusion and dispute among the very best commentators on our present text.

The time of Israel's deliverance drew near. One more miracle, one more calamity, was to sweep over the enemies of the Lord, and that the most terrible of all; and Pharaoh and Egypt were to lie prostrate with awe and fear, and the bands of the Lord's people were to be broken. In the night of the 14th day of the month called Abib, or Nisan, and which, ever since, has remained the first month of the ecclesiastical year of the Israelites, Jehovah was to pass through the



land of Egypt, and to smite all the first-born in the land, both man and beast. According to the opinion of some, this was the night between the 13th and the 14th day of the month, that being the night belonging properly to the 14th day, as the days commenced with sunset, not at midnight nor at sunrise. But it is a fact well ascertained, that in matters both of private and public worship the evening was reckoned as belonging to the day previous, as it is with us now; and that the evening services, or sacrifices, were regarded as forming a part, not of the duties of the coming day, but as completing those of the closing one. The nature of the case would seem to lead to such a view and usage. In accordance with this view runs the account of the exit of Israel from Egypt. On the 10th day, that is, the day following the 10th night of the month, a lamb for the Passover was to be procured, and kept till the 14th day corresponding. On that day, between the evenings separating that day from the 15th day of the month, the Paschal lamb was to be killed, roasted with fire, and eaten with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. The blood of this lamb was to be put upon the door-posts, to distinguish the houses of the Lord's people from those of his enemies; and *that* was the night in which the Lord passed through Egypt, and smote the first-born. During that night and the following morning, the Israelites were driven out from Egypt. Ever afterwards, the Passover seems to have been celebrated at the time here specified, and the tradition of the Jews, which is ancient enough to be admitted as representing the practices of the Passover just as they were in universal observance at the time of Christ,—that tradition orders that the houses of the Israelites should be searched and carefully purified from all leaven or fermenting substances *on* the 14th day of the month, beginning the search at the dawn of the



day, or, as they now explain it already, during the night previous, and by candle-light, and finishing at noon on the 14th day. Till *then* leavened bread could be eaten; the Paschal lamb was not yet killed. But from mid-day and onward no leaven was used; between the evenings,—that is, probably from three o'clock in the afternoon to nine o'clock in the evening,—the Passover was eaten, the killing of the lambs beginning probably at three o'clock in the afternoon. Thus it came to pass, naturally, that the 14th day was, in common intercourse, called the Passover day,—the day when they kill the Passover, or when the Passover must be killed, although that day was a common day until near its close, when the Paschal solemnities had actually commenced; and even then, it seems, needful purchases could be made, and alms distributed, till the beginning of the 15th day,—that is, till sunset of the 14th. *Then* all servile work was prohibited, as on the Sabbath. The 15th day was a sacred day, and *the* proper day of the Passover and of unleavened bread, which bread was the only one permitted through seven days, till the close of the 21st day. Both the 15th and the 21st days were sacredly observed by an holy convocation, while sacrifices continued to be offered through the entire seven days.

“And it came to pass,” says Matthew, chap. 26: 1, 2, “when Jesus had delivered all these sayings,”—that is, those contained in the chapters 24 and 25,—“he said unto his disciples, Ye know that after two days is the feast of Passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified.” These words our Lord uttered probably on Wednesday evening. “Then,” Matthew continues, “assembled the Chief Priests and the Scribes and the Elders of the people unto the palace of the High Priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted, that they might take Jesus by subtilty and kill him;

but they said, not on the feast-day, lest there should be an uproar among the people." Only four days before, Judas Iscariot, being offended by the reproof which Christ administered to him in defence of Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who anointed his feet as he sat at meat in the house of Simon the leper, paid a secret visit to these dignitaries, and offered to betray Christ for money. If the minds of the Sanhedrim were then not yet fully made up, or if there was any cause of hesitancy existing with some of them on the subject, our Saviour's thundering farewell address on Wednesday afternoon removed all irresolution, and united the whole Sanhedrim in the desperate resolve that he must perish, by whatever means his ruin might be accomplished. It was plain to *them* that such a despiser of their ecclesiastical authority could not be permitted to live. This was a holy work, sanctifying every means and befitting any time and place, however sacred, which its execution might claim. Hence their only concern, in resolving to bring him to his death on the great Passover day, is lest the people, favoring him, might rise in his defence. It is, however, a mistake to suppose that the Jews held no court of justice on the Sabbath. They did so; and the locality for the transactions on the Sabbath was larger than the ordinary one. So far, therefore, no sacrifice of principle or feeling was necessary in what the Sanhedrim here resolved upon and afterwards executed; although, if there had been a difficulty in passing judgment on so sacred a day, or in executing a supposed criminal, the work of exterminating heresy would have been considered holy and good. Thus, even now, the Easter season, both among the Jews and the native Christians in the East, is peculiarly devoted to the sacred work of heresy-hunting and

persecution, as a means of purifying the church, and of atoning for their past sins.

It was, therefore, on the evening between the 14th and the 15th day of Nisan that our Saviour and his disciples celebrated the Passover, and that in common with all other Israelites. When John, introducing us to the last Passover of Christ, says, "Now, *before* the feast of the Passover," &c., he refers to the *consciousness* which Christ had of his divine dignity while entering upon the most trying scenes of his life, and also the touching example which he gave of his humility in washing the feet of the disciples. This *act* certainly was performed *before* the solemnities of the Passover began.

Christ died on the great feast of Passover, or of unleavened bread. Here, however, the question arises, if he died on that great day, how is it that all the four Evangelists call it "the preparation"? If it was the great festival day, how could it at the same time be the *preparation*? The reply is simple. The term translated "preparation" means simply Friday, as it does to this day in the living language of the Greeks; and it received that name, being regularly the preparation for the common Sabbath. It is also called the fore-Sabbath, or "the day before the Sabbath" (Mark 15: 42), which clearly indicates the meaning of the word. Some think the Jews could not have eaten already the Paschal lamb when Christ was crucified, because John tells us (chap. 18: 28) that they would not go into the judgment hall, "lest they should be defiled, *but that they might eat the Passover.*" But the term Passover, while on the 14th day it designated, by way of eminence, the *Paschal lamb*, included all the other sacrifices and peace-offerings through the seven days of



the feast, and naturally always designated *that* sacrificial feast which the Passover days afforded severally.

The question of the disciples, where the Passover was to be prepared, was probably asked in good season during the forenoon, in order to give some time to the landlord who was to prepare the repast. The reply of Christ was more particularly directed to Peter and John, as Luke informs us; and the whole of the charge given to them, and variously related by the Evangelists, would be as follows: "Go into the city, and when ye shall have entered it, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in, and say unto the good man of the house, The Master saith, My time is at hand,—I will keep the Passover at thy house with my disciples; where is the chamber where I shall keep it? and he will show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready."

The opinion that Christ had beforehand spoken to the man in whose house he intended to keep the Passover, and that on that account he could so exactly foretell that a servant with a pitcher of water would await the disciples when they should enter the city, and that an upper room furnished would be shown to them, though it is held by neither few nor insignificant men, I deem so utterly and glaringly inconsistent with the dignity of Christ and the solemnity of his situation at this period, that I shall content myself with having barely noticed it. I deem the indication of these circumstances to be one exhibition more of that knowledge of Christ which he possessed as a property belonging to his divine nature,—omniscience,—which he does not indeed seem to have exercised at all times, but rather denied, but which was always at his command, and used by him on every proper occasion. The familiar and indefinite language which Christ puts into the



mouth of John and Peter, seems to imply that the landlord was acquainted with Christ, and perhaps a secret believer in him.

There is no reason to suppose that our Lord left at all his peaceful retreat during Thursday, until it was time to go to the place where his last repast was prepared. Judas Iscariot, driven away from Christ and the pious circle around him by the rebukes of a guilty conscience, found pretexts enough, no doubt, to absent himself during the course of that memorable day, and wandered about, like an evil spirit, seeking rest and finding none; and thus Christ was probably all the day alone with his dear disciples, and with Lazarus and Martha and Mary, and perhaps one or two pious friends more. And it is delightful and soul-refreshing to think that at least one drop of heavenly comfort was mingled with the bitter cup of his approaching sufferings. In what holy conversation, mingled here and there with a psalm and with fervent prayer, the day was spent; what artless tokens of pious affection and tender regard were given and received; how the bond of perfectness must have bound faster and tighter heart to heart, and the fire of love and godliness in each believer gathered strength, brightness and warmth, from mingling with all the rest close around the fountain-head of life and light,—it is easier to conceive than to describe. O! if Christians could do away the idle talk out of their mouth, and remember that their whole life is but one continued parting scene; that they are all the time parting with men and things, with duties and enjoyments, with youth and health and strength, with hours, days and years, to see them no more till the day of account and retribution,—O! what solemnity, what sacred awe, what holy caution, what heavenly wisdom, would overflow and sanctify all their words, and looks, and deeds! How would

the laughter of folly die, and the idle tale grow insipid, and worldly schemes fade, and the dread of eternity take wings and fly away, and the unction from the Holy One descend, and the peace of God and the foretaste of heaven fill their hearts and their dwellings! Ah! our guilt is our immeasurable loss! O, that my head were waters, and mine eyes fountains of tears, that I might weep day and night over my years wasted and lost, over more than half a life spent but too much like the silly and useless tale of a fool! May the Lord have mercy, and forgive and heal me and all his people from that abominable thoughtlessness which so much spoils our conversation, and so deeply wounds the heart and the cause of our Lord!

The time to depart draws near, and our Lord makes ready with his disciples. None but himself knew that this was to be his last farewell from Lazarus, Mary and Martha, from his seat at their table, from the bowers or closet of his retirement for meditation and secret prayer, from the corner where his humble couch used to be spread out at night. He had long before left and denied greater things than these for us; but a tender heart never gets used to parting, or hardened against the melting sorrows of separation from those we love. A tear may well have started in his eye, as he blessed them, and, thanking them for their love and all their kind services, commended them to his Father in heaven, as the rewarder of every work of faith and love. And many an aspiration may have gone up to heaven in their behalf, as they passed along the solitary way to the city.

In due season he arrived at the appointed place; the table is spread; the Paschal lamb, the other refreshments (John 13: 1), and the cup of blessing, are served up; and Jesus, knowing "that his hour was come that he should depart out

of this world unto the Father; having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (Luke 22: 15, 16). "And he said unto them, With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Thus the most solemn of all subjects was almost introduced, and our Lord ready to proceed in remarks which would have opened another world to them, when, even at *this* time, his never-failing charity and forbearance were put to the trial by a most unhappy interruption (verse 24). "And there was also a strife among them," says Luke, "which of them should be accounted the greatest."

They had repeatedly been reproved for their undue aspiration after greatness. But, ah! pride sits deep in the human breast. The opinion is advanced by some, that the contention of the apostles arose in connection with the preliminary custom of having the feet of the guests washed, which none of the disciples wished to do to the others, and which, at last, was done by Christ himself. This is possible, perhaps even probable. However, let us be as charitable as we can, being encompassed ourselves with like infirmities. Indeed, I do not think that the ideas of the disciples respecting the kingdom of Christ were quite as gross and secular as some suppose them to have been; and aspiring to eminence in *that* kingdom which they supposed Christ would rear may very probably have been something very different from the coarse ambition of wholly worldly-minded men. Moreover, to be great in the kingdom of Christ would bring a man into nearer relation to, and intercourse with, Christ himself; and, besides, in this instance, the "strife" was perhaps occasioned by the questions, who should already now sit nearest to Christ, who on



his right, who on his left, and who opposite to him. How much such considerations affect and alter the nature of the case it is easy to see; and we would almost forgive them, even if they had striven quite earnestly. Had we ourselves been there, I do not know what we should have done; and in a certain sense we all aspire, and ought to aspire, to as high a place in the kingdom of Christ as we may. But the apostles ought to have remembered, and so ought we, that in the kingdom of Christ laws and principles govern which are diametrically opposite to the maxims of the world. There a man becomes great by becoming small; the greatest saint there is the most helpless sinner; all reign by serving, and every one is the least; — and hence true and thorough self-humiliation is the only wing which will bear a sinner up to the right hand of the King of kings. In heaven competition works the contrary way (that is, downward), and the strife of self-denying, self-forgetting love is the only one known among the true children of light in either world, that above and that here below. The disciples were still both wrong and unwise; therefore, to strive for PREËMINENCE, though their strife may not have been one for *carnal* preëminence; and they needed to be reproved and corrected; and Christ, in his untiring forbearance, proceeds to the correction without delay. And the *manner* in which he corrects their fault is perfumed with the very frankincense of heaven, and an eternal monument of divine love.

“And the supper having commenced (του δείπνου γενομένου, for so I must translate, and not like our English version, which renders it “the supper being ended”), the devil having already (not *now*) put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him, Jesus, “when he noticed the contention of the disciples, although he knew that the Father



had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God,"—although he was conscious of his supreme dignity and his divine nature,—“he riseth from supper, and laid aside his (upper) garments, and took a towel and girded himself; after that, he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.” In reality, the supper had not yet begun to be partaken of. It was commenced only so far as Christ and most of the disciples were already seated. It began when the disciples' feet were washed by Christ. He acted the part of a *servant*, and that of the *lowest servant* that was at all permitted to enter the apartment. How soon the strife for preëminence must have ceased, you may imagine! “Then cometh he to Simon Peter; and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost *thou* wash *my* feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me,”—thus seizing upon Peter's own terms, he says, You need not refuse this service from me, for you must, after all, receive it in a still higher sense, if you want to be my true disciples. “Simon Peter,” in the ardor of his feeling ever flying from extreme to extreme, “saith unto him, Lord, not my *feet* only, but also my *hands* and my *head* ;”—another specimen of honest but ill-directed effort to become eminent in the family of Christ *by aspiration* ; he wanted to be more washed than the rest. But Christ, tempering his untimely zeal, and returning to the literal sense of language, replies, “He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet,—then he is clean every whit ;” that is, he that has washed his hands, and perhaps his face too, on entering the guest-chamber (and

you have done so), needeth not to wash these again; but, if he wishes to be particularly clean and comfortable at the repast, he may get his feet washed, and then he is sufficiently clean for the occasion, be it ever so splendid or solemn. Then, again returning to the spiritual meaning of his terms, he says, hinting at Judas' case, who had joined them by this time, "Ye are clean, but not all." Then he puts on his dress again, and returns to his seat at the table; which shows once more that the supper was *not finished*, but *begun merely*. The application of this example of humility, which Christ made after having resumed his place, you all well know. I do not therefore rehearse it. This application was made to the case in hand; but it was recorded also for the purpose of universal imitation throughout the church. But it is a hard lesson. How many a Pope, Patriarch, Cardinal, Bishop and Priest,—how many a Lord Bishop, how many a Doctor of Divinity, how many a preacher of the Gospel, how many a missionary, how many thousands of professed disciples,—do you think will be found at the judgment day who never learned or practised a syllable of it? How many who knew it, and admired it, and talked of it, and wrote about it, in prose and rhyme, and wept over its inimitable beauties,—but never followed it; how many of such, I say, will be there? How many a poor beggar will be there; how many a poor ignorant old woman; how many a child, unable perhaps to read, or to express a thought correctly, but who had this most precious lesson in their hearts, and showed it in their lives!

"With them numbered may we be,  
Here and in eternity!"

When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified and said (John 13: 21, 22), Verily, verily, one

of you shall betray me. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake (Matt. 26: 22). "And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me." Here Christ does not intend to designate the very person who should betray him; for it was in every disciple's power to withhold his hand from dipping with Christ into any dish, and thus to escape the charge of treason.

It may be the landlord and his family joined with Christ and his company in partaking of the Paschal lamb; for the lamb was to be wholly consumed,—and thirteen men, who expect to partake of a supper afterwards, would not think of consuming a whole lamb. Or, at all events, the landlord and some of his male servants, all of whom probably knew Christ and were known by him, must have been about the table when Christ began to speak of the treason of Judas. What was more natural, especially if they were disciples in the common sense, than that *they* too should have asked, Lord, is it I? And, indeed, such a suspicion would much rather have fallen upon the master of the house, or his people, than upon the nearer disciples of Christ. The object of Christ, in giving the above general reply, seems then to have been to clear the family from that suspicion, and to limit it to the twelve disciples; as also the Evangelist Mark (14: 20) paraphrases it: "And he answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve that dippeth with me in the dish." *To dip with one into* the dish is a mere proverbial phrase to express the relation of family or table companionship. This is confirmed by the Evangelist Luke (22: 21), who expresses the same idea thus: "But behold the hand of him that



betrayeth me is with me on the table." But Simon Peter, forward and impatient as ever, and also doubtless anxious for himself, was not to be put off with so indefinite an answer, which, indeed, so far as it went, did only increase his apprehensions. He therefore beckons John (who was leaning on Jesus' bosom,—that is, reclining next to and in front of Christ) to ask who the man was of whom he spake. John asks, "Lord, who is it?" (John 13 : 26) and receives privately the definite answer : "He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it; and when he had dipped the sop he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon." This sign was, however, intelligible only to John, and did not make manifest the traitor yet. Christ, presiding at the table, was then probably distributing portions among his disciples, and, being then about to give Judas his share, he thus made him known privately to John. Now at length comes the question of Judas himself, who seems, for very good reasons, to have been *the last* to ask it, and who did it, probably, merely to avoid suspicion. For, had he asked it before, there would have been no need of the question of Peter and John. (Matt. 26 : 25.) Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said" (that is, thou art the one). (John 13 : 27—29.) "And after the sop, Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest do quickly. Now, no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or that he should give something to the poor. He then, having received the sop, went immediately out, and it was night."

"And it was night;"—a night black and gloomy as the deeds it was to bring forth. It seems as though the night



of hell had been poured around Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to shroud the brightness of the full moon, and to hide him with his infernal designs and works. But, O ! what must have been the spiritual darkness which filled his heart, while he was groping along through the narrow streets, to work out his own ruin and damnation, and forever to sell his Saviour, his soul, and his heaven, for a pocketful of dust ! There he goes, away from Christ and over to Lucifer and Beelzebub, whose son he was ; fleeing from the first communion-table ever spread on earth, to the reprobated enemies of God and of his anointed,—away from heaven, down to the lowest hell ! But let him go ; he is undone, and not to be reclaimed. Jesus' voice and love prevailed not over him, and what in heaven or on earth will ? Let us return to the upper chamber. There is no night ; there is no darkness ; but light and glory. (v. 31.)—"Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me ; and, as I said to the Jews (so might I also say to you, though in a different and better sense), whither I go you cannot come. A new commandment give I unto you, that ye should love one another as I have loved you ; that ye also love one another." That is, hitherto you have endeavored to love your neighbor as yourselves, and when you did thus much you deemed yourselves as having done all ; and, indeed, you had done all which was required by the law. But now comes that *new commandment*, of which the law knows nothing. Hitherto, lawful self-love was the standard of your love to your brethren, but henceforth you will receive a new spirit and a new commandment, to love one another *as I have*

*loved you ; my love to you will now be the standard of your love to each other ;* and while none of you will expect any brother to lay down his life for him, each will be ready to lay down his life for all, and for any one who knows and loves me. Then follows the bold pledge of Peter to lay down his life for Christ, and the prediction of his fall. In the mean time the supper was ended, and the cup of blessing which belonged to the celebration of the Paschal feast was passed round. Then follows the institution of the Lord's Supper, and of the new Dispensation. This order of events is intimated by Luke, who speaks of two cups,—of one before, the other after the bread : one is that belonging to the *Jewish Dispensation*, the *Old Testament* ; the other is the cup of the *New Testament* in the blood of Christ, “a sacrifice of nobler name and richer blood than they.”

During the celebration of the Lord's Supper, probably the contents of the 14th chapter of St. John were delivered. The words “arise, let us go hence,” which we find at the close of that chapter, seem to indicate that by that time Christ began to get ready to pass on to Gethsemane. The hymn of thanksgiving being sung, they arose from the table. Then, while the disciples were standing about him, still in the upper room, he continued his conversation, as contained in John 15 and 16, and closed the solemnities of the evening by the prayer contained in the 17th chapter of the same Evangelist.\* “And when they had sung an hymn,” say Matthew and Mark, “they went out into the Mount of Olives ;” “and he came out,” says Luke, “and went, as he was wont, into the Mount of Olives ; and his disciples also followed him.” “When Jesus had spoken these words,” says John, “he went forth with his disciples over the brook

Cedron, where was a garden, into which he entered and his disciples."

Thus I have endeavored to sketch and arrange the events of Thursday, in the manner which appeared most consistent to my own mind, after a close comparison of the four Evangelists, and after a consultation of the best means within my reach, which indeed are the best ones now existing. I have had occasion to dissent somewhat from either of my helps; but I have done so with reasons which seemed to me plainly to outweigh human authority. You are aware that, according to the view which I have given, Judas, the traitor, went away *before* the Lord's Supper was celebrated, which is the most important point in which I have been obliged to depart from some of those of whose labors I have availed myself. I have had no personal interest to do so, but rather contrariwise.

I should now like to have as much time again for practical remarks as we have spent upon the development of our subject. But our time is more than expired; and I feel that to tax your patience further would be more than what I am entitled to. Take, my friends, this Meditation as it is, and not as it ought to be. Some critical remarks, which crowded themselves irresistibly into it, have, I know, done much injury to its warmth, but they could not be omitted.

But what troubles me most is, that I have so much failed to set forth Christ in the fulness of his beauty and love, in which he appears through the whole scene through which we have passed. This could, however, not have been done without an analysis of all he uttered on the occasion, and this must needs have occupied days.

But let me not turn away now from our Meditation without paying some feeble tribute of admiration to Him who loved his own that were in the world even to the end. He



knew all which was before him. He knew that he had seen his last setting sun; he knew this was his *last night*; he knew that within two or three hours he would be prostrated in the dust under the weight of *our* guilt, and be in the far most disconsolate condition in which ever man was; he knew that within a few hours he should be dragged and hurried back by the very path and through the very gate by which he was about to go over to the Mount of Olives; he knew that during the night he should be forsaken of all his disciples, be pulled and thrust through the streets of Jerusalem, calumniated, mocked, spit upon, whipped, and scourged; he knew that ere the sun should reach his meridian height again he should pass through the opposite gate, to be nailed to the accursed tree; he knew that before another evening should come he would lie in the cold grave; and still he seeks no consolation from his friends, he makes no efforts to excite their sympathies. Nay, he pities and comforts them, he prays with them and for them, that their faith might not cease; and he labors for their good to his last breath, until the "sorrows of death" and the "pains of hell" gat hold upon him,—no otherwise than if he was to prepare *them*, and not *himself*, for death. Still more: he provides for the comfort and consolation of his dear flock through all future times, and leaves them an inexhaustible legacy in the feast of his dying love, in the sure promise of that eternal Comforter whom he promised to send, and in the unfailing prospect of his personal return to gather all his beloved unto himself, that they might be where he is, and forever behold and share his glory. Does not this picture bear the seal of heaven? Will any one say it is earthly, and has sprung up in the heart of selfish man? Does it not *flow down* with the tender mercies of God?



May he who was comforting his friends and praying for his foes, when they were in the strength of life and health, and he in the agonies of death,—may he comfort us from the throne of his glory, and plead our cause upon the mercy-seat, when we are gasping in death, and our souls take their flight from this world to return no more ! Amen.

## IV.

### CHRIST IN GETHSEMANE.

And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives. Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night : for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow [*twice*, — MARK], thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples. Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death : tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little further [about a stone's cast, — LUKE 22 : 41], and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me ; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour ? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation ; the spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O, my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again ; for their eyes were heavy [neither wist they what to answer him, — MARK 14 : 40]. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. — MATTHEW 26 : 30—44. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly ; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down

to the ground. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow. — LUKE 22 : 43—45. And (he) saith unto them, (will you) Sleep on now, and take your rest (?); it is enough, the hour is come ; behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up ; let us go ; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand. — MARK 14 : 41, 42.

IN our last Meditation on that general subject of which we have now so solemn a part before us, we left Christ and his eleven disciples on their way out of the city, after the solemnities of the Passover and the institution of the Lord's Supper were finished. It was now late, and the hour was drawing near for a scene in the history of our world, the awful solemnity and the glorious consequences of which, vying with each other, equally and immeasurably transcend seraphic powers of thought and of praise. The hour was fixed and the place appointed in the divine purpose ; and our Saviour makes no delay to repair to the spot which was to be consecrated within an hour by his tears and groans, his sweat and his blood. After passing that gate which was situated nearest to the temple walls on the north, now called Stephen's gate, the road winds down, somewhat to the right, into the valley of Jehoshaphat, through which was then meandering the brook of Cedron. A few steps after crossing the bridge of that brook, which is now quite dried up, and turning about to the south-east, the road is divided into two ; the one, on the left, ascending more towards the summit of Mount Olivet, the other, on the right, rising more gently, and winding around the eminence ; but both leading towards Bethphage and Bethany. The road is thus divided by an olive-yard, surrounded by a low stone wall ; and within it the visitor may still see eight olive-trees of great antiquity. This is Gethsemane. It was then furnished with an olive-press, probably also made use of by the

neighbors, which circumstance gave it this name. To this humble spot Christ now resorts, with his eleven disciples. Our Lord seems to have been acquainted with the owner; and he was *in the habit* of spending his nights there, whenever it was too late to return to his pious friends at Bethany. For Luke says, that "he went, *as he was wont*, to the Mount of Olives;" and the Evangelist John says, that "Jesus *oftentimes* resorted thither with his disciples." It was, however, not a public or much frequented place; for John remarks that Judas, which betrayed him, knew the place: which implies that it was not *generally* known to be one of the resting-places of our Lord, or even much noticed by people at large. It may have been a poor, pious family, or, perhaps, a single, plain, and godly keeper of the garden, that resided there; and poverty and piety have always been sufficient to withdraw men from the notice and regard of the world. Even at *this* season, when all tolerably furnished houses in and about Jerusalem must needs have been filled to overflowing, Gethsemane appears as a deserted and solitary spot.

It seems probable, too, that whenever Christ resorted to this place he expected to spend his night *in the open air*, slumbering with his disciples under the trees, or on some seat or bench about the humble dwelling, as though this was a more eligible couch than could be expected in the house itself, if there was one. For none of his disciples even *suggest* the idea of calling the inmates up, though this must have appeared to them desirable, as they could not possibly be ignorant of some approaching danger, after all the solemn preparations which their Lord had made for his separation from them. *Swords* they had provided *against* their Master's will; but to get into a safe dwelling in the garden



does not occur to them,—an evidence that there was none there. “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man had not where to lay his head.”

Neither the High Priest, nor even his servants, nor any of the self-mortifying Pharisees, seem to have so much as known that place where Christ “*oftentimes*” took his night’s rest on the ground, after a day of hard labor performed, and of still harder rebuke and wrong suffered. And thus it often afterwards happened that the most precious and lovely of God’s children lodged and worshipped in caves and forests, unvisited by and unknown to their persecuting enemies in high and sacred office, except when infernal fury goaded them on to explore those unenviable abodes, in order to draw out godly men and women and innocent children to torture and death. But now those suffering saints are in heaven with Christ; and their infuriated enemies, that were mightier than they, are with Annas and Caiaphas in hell. To this place he resorted now for the last time. Let us, my dear friends, accompany him. Our respective personal cases, our personal, eternal destinies, are eternally interwoven with its scene, a scene to which I can find no epithet,—surely our hearts ought to be no strangers to it. Would I could lead you now into the very place, instead of endeavoring to recall its unparalleled events in unfit words and fleeting sounds. It would be better for us all, perhaps, to stand around the sacred place in silence, and see what never man saw and hear what never man heard, than to listen to the united harmony of heaven, or to view at one glance from the Mount of Patmos the golden streets and pearly gates of New Jerusalem.

But let us lose no time. We will attend to our subject as well as we can. May we be blessed to-day with a solemn and humble frame of mind; may we be enabled to put off our

shoes, for the ground upon which we stand is holy ground; and may I be enabled to speak, not with the intelligence, power and eloquence, of a superior spirit (for this would render me no more fit to do justice to the subject than I am now), but with the feelings of a poor, pardoned, believing sinner, who knows nothing but Christ and his cross.

I propose to divide the subject of our Meditation into four parts :

I. CHRIST'S AGONY IN THE GARDEN.

II. HIS UTTER DESTITUTION OF ALL HUMAN COMFORT AND SUPPORT.

III. HIS ENTIRE SUBJECTION TO HIS FATHER'S WILL.

IV. HIS HEAVENLY CONSOLATIONS.

I. Many curious and not a few profane inquiries have been made with regard to the topic now before us. What was the cause of the anxiety and distress which Jesus manifested in the garden? Was it mere apprehension of what he knew was about to burst upon him? But, if he knew his approaching sufferings, certainly he knew, too, "the glory which should follow;" he was sure of victory. Could *he*, who had, for thirty years and more, foregone the very glories of heaven, and borne not the *usual*, but the most *unusual* inconveniences of this miserable world,—could he experience such misgivings at that catastrophe, which, though dreadful in the extreme, was the very one which was to work the peace of this world, and open to him the high gates and the "everlasting doors" of his endless and universal reign? True, it may be said, stoicism had not destroyed his natural sensibilities; fanaticism had not inflamed his imagination, nor sundered the mysterious ties nor destroyed the mutual sympathies of body and soul in him; quietism had not wrapt him away from the world of realities into that wide, lifeless,

breathless desert of moral enchantment, where all natural and moral distinctions pretend to vanish; true, that madness which men call bravery was of all things the furthest from him; and all the selfish motives by which common wicked men are borne on in the closest encounter of perils, sufferings, and death, in every imaginable form, could be no support to him who was holy and harmless, and separate from sinners; and we will even grant that he was either not permitted, or did not choose to call forth the energies of his *divine nature*, to sustain him in his dreadful contest, but that he encountered it purely with the powers of his holy humanity. To this concession, indeed, we are driven by the fact that *an angel, a created being*, was sent to comfort and *strengthen* him. And we will grant, too, that the Christian martyrs, who in after times showed so much courage, were in a very different and far better situation than he; they had a Saviour in heaven, and a special Comforter sent into their hearts by their risen, ascended, and omnipotent Redeemer, while "the man Jesus Christ" in Gethsemane feels himself *solitary*. Nevertheless, if mere *bodily* sufferings at hand distressed him so much, where, we ask, is the unconquerable fortitude of this superior person? Where is the advantage of a calm and peaceful mind such as *he* possessed? Where are the consolations of a pure and holy conscience? where the comforts of untarnished piety? where the secret communications of the divine favor? and where the power of faith, and of prayer unremitted? Was their combined influence unable to support him at the approach of *transitory bodily* sufferings, though their *degree* be ever so great? Verily, there is something more here than the apprehension of bodily pain and death, be it what it may.



“Search the Scriptures,” saith the Lord; “they testify of me.”

Already, in the Old Dispensation, the laying on of the sinner’s hands upon the head of the sacrifice which was to be offered in his place, and the laying on of Israel’s sins upon the scape-goat, were evidently calculated to awaken and to cherish the impression of a *translation of sin*. The very *words* which the Scriptures use on those occasions express the idea, and *could* make no other impression upon a plain, unsophisticated people, who were far enough from the presumption of correcting the supposed blunders or the daring language of the Bible, by the abstract principles of their moral philosophy, as the wise men of our age are doing. Men find it very hard, I know, to *understand* how sin should be *transferred*. But, whether it be any easier to *understand* how, *sin being untransferred*, the sinner should be *treated* like a righteous man, because the righteous man was treated like a sinner on his account,—and that under a *perfect moral government*,—I leave them to judge. But, after all, “why should it be thought a thing incredible with you” that *sin* should be transferred,—with you, who acknowledge, with one consent, that a single word uttered before the judge, or one stroke of the pen, may make one man surety for another, and thus *transfer a pecuniary debt* from one individual to another, to all essential intents and purposes,—a debt which that other individual never incurred, nor had any connection with whatever? Not as though the surety of the real debtor declared, by taking the place of the latter, that he had originally contracted the debt, or as though any one understood him as making, in any sense, this untrue assertion. No; his character is clear, his generous motive universally admired: yet the debt is trans-



ferred; nor could this benevolent person ever be legally called upon for payment, if this were not the case. Against the possibility of such a transfer no one objects, that I am aware of. Whence, all at once, the impossibility of such a transfer, merely because the debt is a *moral*, and not a *pecuniary* one? If one debt may conceivably be transferred as well as another, is it not really *seeking* difficulties where there are none, to say that "Jesus Christ the righteous" was merely *treated* by God like a sinner, *without* a transfer of our guilt to him, and not rather *on account of it, and after it*? Who has ever heard of a man's going to prison for the debts of another, without having previously recognized those debts as his own? The whole scheme of sacrifices speaks of a transfer of sin, and an exchange of places before the bar of God, in favor of believing sinners,—and what the sacrifices *shadowed forth* becomes *reality* in Christ. Our sins are his, his righteousness is ours, if we believe. It is, humanly speaking, a legal transaction, which took place within the council of the Holy Trinity before the world was; and that transfer is the very subject of that covenant between the Father and the Son, upon which the salvation of a perishing world rests. Taking *this view* of the subject, we shall find a difficult verse, in Psalms 69, rendered plain. This Psalm is a Messiah prophecy; Christ has repeatedly quoted it, and applied it to himself. The fifth verse of it reads thus:—"O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee;"—a troublesome passage! The word "foolishness" means, in the actual connection, *sins of ignorance*, at the mildest; and the word "sins" expresses positive transgressions,—real guilt. To shift off this verse from Christ upon another subject, is impossible, without doing violence to the sacred

text ; while no figure of speech will soften these expressions so as to make them predicable of anything in the character or life of Christ. Christ had sins, then, which he called *his own* ; and whose could they originally have been,—since he was ever sinless,—but *ours* ? They were ours,—now they are his ; of course they were transferred, like a debt ; and their payment now demanded from him occasions him the anguish predicted in our Psalm, and fulfilled in our text. Of similar import, probably, is Ps. 40 : 12. In 2 Cor. 5 : 21, we read, “for he (that is, God) hath him (Christ) to be *sin* for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made *the righteousness* of God in him.” To take “sin” as meaning sin-offering, would be destroying the relation of the term “sin” to the opposite term “righteousness of God.” The import is strictly this : God made Christ a sinner for us, that we might become divinely righteous in him ; just as the judge pronounces the surety to be the real debtor of the sum in question, while the real contractor of the debt is *really* released. What language can be stronger ? What thought more comfortable to a believing sinner ? To adduce but one passage more of this kind.—Gal. 3 : 13, it is said, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made *a curse for us* ;” everywhere an exchange of character and place at the bar of heaven, and not merely of sentence, or fate. The language of Scripture is too powerful to admit of such a superficial view, and one which, in my estimation, is beset with many and *real* difficulties. Again, the apostle, in the epistle to the Hebrews, 5 : 7, says that Christ, “in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him *that was able to save him from death, was heard*.” Whether this passage refers to Christ’s sufferings *in the garden ex-*

*clusively*, or only by way of eminence, is immaterial to us now. According to it, he was heard by him that was able to save him from death. Yet from bodily death he neither was saved, nor did he choose or ask to be so. From what death, then, was he saved? Let the Psalmist reply:—"Thou hast delivered my soul from death." Or, if you want the most direct answer, here it is:—"The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord, and in thy salvation shall he greatly rejoice! Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips, Selah. He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever." According to these passages, Christ was saved from the death of the soul,—the second death, the terrors of which must, therefore, have stood in threatening array about him during some period of his sufferings; and, as that deliverance was the effect of his strong crying and supplication to God, what period, I ask, answers this description better than the awful hour of darkness and terror in Gethsemane? Nor is this a matter of mere speculation, or unhallowed, curious inquiry. Were this the case, I should never have touched upon it. No, it has its profound practical interest. In Heb. 4: 15, the apostle gives us the consolation, and every Christian feels its preciousness, that we have an High Priest at the right hand of God, who "was in all points tempted (exercised) like as we are, yet without sin," that is, without committing any sin. And the same apostle assures us,—and every Christian feels its truth,—that we needed such an High Priest. But where is the one of all the "points," where the period, what the condition, in which we need the experienced sympathies of our great High Priest more than when our sins rush upon us like destruction from the Almighty, and when our very souls are



swallowed up, almost, by the terrors of the second death! O! if he did not know how to sympathize with us then, he could not have been said to be tempted in all points,—no, not in the most essential point,—like as we are, and we should want another High Priest besides him still.

What, then, was the agony of Christ in the garden? We may now venture a reply, though the full view of the subject the Lord will doubtless give us himself, in the other world. First, our Lord's agony in the garden included as much of that mental distress which the sins of our race would have brought upon their consciences, when awakened and tender, as the divine law required for payment of an equivalent from a personage so eminent as Christ was, an ordeal which rendered him at the same time infinitely more than equally experienced with the most tried and tempted of his followers upon earth. But, secondly, that which may be called the natural effects of sin upon awakened conscience was not all that Christ endured. This could have been no equivalent, in the balance of the sanctuary in heaven, sufficient to cover the whole ground of our debt to the broken law. The convicted sinner, whatever the meltings of his soul may be in view of his sins, does not pay thereby so much as *one* sin committed in a wandering thought. The law has very different claims upon him from these. Eternal horrors are the righteous penalty of rebellion against the majesty of Heaven. They are emphatically death—a death as eternal as the soul that sinned. The equivalent of *these*, as incurred by the whole uncounted host of redeemed sinners, was laid upon the soul of Jesus. He paid what he had not robbed, the enormous debt of a rebellious world. It is indeed obvious that, in our present state of knowledge in divine things, which is but “in part,” we are unable to estimate what divine justice would require from



the incarnate Son of the Father, to correspond to the *extent* of a penalty to be exacted from an entire world, and to the *eternity* of endurance to which sinners were justly doomed. So much, however, is unquestionable,—that this great Sufferer, who had come down from the throne of glory, was *able* to satisfy *any* demands whatsoever of the law, by making the *intensity* of his sorrows answer to the *extent* and the *infinitude* of his free self-renunciation to the *eternity* which attached by the just sentence of Heaven to the penalty due from the transgressors thus atoned for. But heaven alone can unfold this great and glorious mystery of godliness. Yes, the terrors of the second death stared into his face, distracted his soul, and created a state of suffering so far beyond human conception and strength, that his bodily frame would, it seems, have succumbed under it, without miraculous aid from above. Then Satan made his last desperate efforts; and that he left no infernal resource untried upon the suffering Saviour, over whom now the waves and billows of a broken law rolled in unrestrained fury, who that knows the arch-fiend will ever doubt? And, lastly, the deep gloom of the hour was still deepened by what was yet to follow, even to the desertion of his soul by the Father of mercies, and the God of all grace and consolation. This is plain from his own words, when he comes to his disciples the last time: “Will you sleep on now and take your rest? It is enough; the hour is come; behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up! let us go! Lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand!” Says the pious Henry, “He had a full and clear prospect of all the sufferings that were before him. He foresaw the treachery of Judas, the unkindness of Peter, the malice of the Jews, and their base ingratitude. He knew that he should now in a few hours be scourged, spit

upon, crowned with thorns, nailed to the cross. Death, in its most dreadful appearances,—Death, in pomp, attended with all its terrors, looked him in the face.”

Thus far we have spoken chiefly of the nature of the agony of Christ in Gethsemane, although the depth and intensity of it necessarily occupied our attention also. Let us now cast one glance more at the latter subject. The evangelists evidently wrote in the clearest frame of mind, and are nothing but sober narrators of their facts, even in this and similar instances. Yet the terms they here use are of great emphasis, and the picture which they draw is full of gloom. Christ no sooner comes to the garden than he takes his three more confidential disciples, separates himself from the rest, and begins to be sorrowful and very heavy (ἡρξατο λυπῆσθαι καὶ ἀδημονεῖν); he became overwhelmed and distracted with distress. These two words in the original text, of which the latter is more emphatic than the former, so as to make a climax, are joined, for the sake of emphasis, to express one thought, together, for the expression of which either word alone would have been too weak. This condition of our Lord the disciples first inferred from his appearance, but soon out of the abundance of his depressed heart his mouth spoke. Unable to bear it any longer alone, he said unto them, “My soul”—my very soul, as we should say —“is exceeding sorrowful”—(περίλυπος) surrounded with sorrow —“even unto death.” Stronger expressions than these do not exist in language, and exaggeration is out of the question here. Then, seeing them weary and sleepy, he adds, “Tarry here”—do not return to the others to sleep; watch with me! His strength was spent, and for the first time he felt the need of human sympathy. But, soon finding even their company burdensome, he tears himself away from them, about a stone’s cast, to pray alone.

Then he assumes the attitude of deepest distress,— he falls “on his face,” and pours out his soul. Submission he finds in his heart while praying, but relief he finds none. Distressed he returns to his disciples, and “findeth them asleep.” And he saith unto Peter, “What!”—you have made such professions of attachment to me, you wanted to die for me,—“could you not watch with me one hour?” Alas! he pleads for one hour’s sympathy and assistance from his weak and drowsy followers. O! how destitute must he have felt himself! He goes the second time to pray alone, and finds no relief: he returns the second time to his disciples, and finds no sympathy. Human relief fails; God remains his last hope. Tearing away once more, he prostrates himself again (compare Luke 22: 45 — *καὶ ἀναστὰς κ. τ. λ.*),—and now the most awful struggle for life begins. And, being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and in the cool night season, while prostrated on the damp ground, the sweat of anguish breaks out over his whole body, and is, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. “And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.” Such, then, was his frame of mind, that no ordinary means did suffice to relieve him; an angel, with an express message and peculiar assurances, must be sent. High and distinguished honor, indeed, to be the bearer of this errand—an errand before unheard of in heaven! But can you think of anything more fit to impress us with ideas of the most awful, I had almost said unnatural distress, than the need of a messenger from heaven to comfort and strengthen Jesus, the Son of God, lest his distress should crush him? But we must hasten to our second topic.

II. I have already and necessarily anticipated so much of the three remaining topics of our Meditation, that I may hope



to study more brevity in remarking upon them than I have been able to do thus far.

There is doubtless something very strange in the conduct of the disciples on this occasion. Eleven pious and tender-hearted, active, self-denying men profoundly asleep, while their beloved Master, for whom they were willing to lay down their lives, is distracted with sorrow and writhing under the agonies of death ! For aught that appears, there is no plea to be urged in their behalf. They had not been obliged to watch the previous nights ; they had not been fatigued during the week past ; all the preceding day they were with Christ at Bethany, except those who ordered the Passover to be prepared. They had just gone through scenes which ought to have stirred at least all the natural powers and sensibilities of their minds. They had just celebrated the deliverance of Israel from bondage — a solemnity which kept many of the Jews up all night ; their hearts must have been deeply affected with the humbling example which Christ gave them in washing their feet, while they were quarrelling for preëminence ; deep anxiety had taken hold on them when they heard that one of them should betray Christ ; they had just attended the institution of the Lord's Supper, had listened to his last affecting discourses, his last prayer, his repeated admonitions to watch ; they had been repeatedly told that they would all flee and forsake their Master this very night, and be offended because of him ; Peter had heard that he would betray him three times before morning ; they knew that this night some important and dismal prophecies should be fulfilled, and that Christ should be betrayed into the hands of sinners and be put to death ; they knew that the traitor was gone already to his infernal work ; and when they came to Gethsemane they saw their Master's distress of mind, and Peter, John



and James, heard his pressing entreaty, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" And is it possible, we are obliged to ask, that they could sleep? Was it naturally possible for them, under such circumstances, to shut their eyes, and to procure that calmness of mind so indispensable for a night's rest, especially in the open air and on the hard ground? It is a fact that they did sleep, and that no combination of the most rousing and alarming circumstances could keep them awake.

No doubt it was intended by a holy Providence, and was one of the burdens which Christ had to bear for us, that he suffered destitute of all human consolation. It does seem as though the disciples had been providentially given up to the most stupefying influence of this body of clay, to disable them to afford relief to their Master when the unmingled cup of suffering was to be drunk to the bottom.

Jesus our Saviour, in this destitute and needy condition, is an object of the deepest interest and of liveliest gratitude to those who know the secret ways of God with his children. They know that every particular sacrifice and deprivation of Christ is like a sown seed, from which rich and waving harvests of spiritual consolation are continually springing up to the dear little flock of his pasture. Not a prayer, not a sigh, not a tear of his, but it procures for them some heavenly treat; and his fastings and deprivations, his watchfulness, weariness and exposures, are richly decking their spiritual table, and draw the curtain of heavenly peace around the defenceless pillows of their rest. And when, in the depth of anguish, they feel the soothing influences of Christian tenderness and sympathy, and are upheld by the wrestling intercessions of their beloved in Christ Jesus,—when they are carried safely through the trying hour of darkness and distress

by the faithful prayers of their watchful friends, poured forth in their hearing at the throne of grace,—ah! then they remember with sweet and humble gratitude the forsaken Jesus in the garden, and a connection between their spiritual riches and comforts and his destitution becomes clear all at once to their souls, of which they had no conception, perhaps, while in health of body and in the cheerful vigor of heart and mind. They rejoice then exceedingly, with a joy full of glory, that ever he did procure such sweet comforts for their distressed souls; and they are prepared to give him everlasting thanks for every tear he dropped upon the accursed ground of this world. Yet they are careful, too, to learn the important lesson of him, not to lean ultimately upon any created arm. They learn of him, when lawful earthly consolations and sympathies fail, to go a little further, and, where no man can see them or overhear their prayer, to fall on their faces, and with naked and unalloyed faith and trust in God to lean upon his almighty arm alone, and to throw themselves with their burden down at his feet, there to live, or there to die.

III. We now come to our third topic, where Christ appears in the highest splendor of his glory; that is, in the free and entire surrender of his rightful personal claims and his lawful interests to a higher end; a surrender made in voluntary and perfect obedience to his Father in heaven, while himself was sinking into the deep gulf of unmitigated sufferings; *unmitigated*, I say, because relief did not come until the close of his struggle. And here we have before us the most powerful and interesting illustration of the very essence of that moral law upon which the divine government rests. “Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in *obeying* the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For

rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; put your burnt-offerings unto your sacrifices and eat flesh. For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning *burnt-offerings or sacrifices*; but this commanded I them, saying, *Obey my voice*, and I will be your God and ye shall be my people." — Jer. 7: 21—23.

The most free and enlarged sacrifices of Christian love are the highest will and good pleasure of an infinitely benevolent God; and he who performs them most bountifully and conscientiously acts in the most perfect *conformity* to the divine nature and obedience to his divine will. Still, singular as it may appear, those sacrifices cannot be commanded and exacted, since this would be destroying their very nature as free and spontaneous actions of a benevolent mind. O, that we could throw away far from us that earth-born economy which asks, Is it my duty to make such or such sacrifices for the perishing souls of men? Alas! I wish it was your inclination to do it; and duty, cold duty, would take good care of itself. But, if you must needs ask about duty, do not, I pray, bring forward the unhallowed stone and the deceitful balance of human prudence. Take the balance of the sanctuary; come here to dark Gethsemane; kneel down near your Saviour on the ground; listen to his prayers, his groans; mark the workings of his torn breast; witness the noblest of all conquests, the freest, greatest of all sacrifices; drink in his spirit; and then, then weigh your duty, and do it. But I know, before you have taken hold of the scales, his spirit has carried you away; the sacrifice which has caused your anxious and unremitted inquiries concerning duty is made, and has already become the source of high delight and profit to



yourself. — “ And he went a little further, about a stone’s cast, and fell on his face and prayed, saying, O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” “ And he went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O, my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done!” “ And he left them and went away again and prayed the third time, saying the same words.”

Shall I spoil and darken and tarnish the moral beauty of this quotation, by explanatory and commendatory remarks, to make it intelligible to some of my hearers, whose spiritual sense may as yet be dead? As well might the earth send up smoke and clouds to polish the sun and the moon and the stars, that the sightless eye-ball might be blest with the glories of the firmament. No! Let those comment upon such a passage who never understood, who never felt its awful solemnity.

My brethren and sisters, who know by happy experience the realities of that glorious world to which you are travelling, — you, who have a living impression of the nature of holiness, and of the Spirit of Christ, and his ways and workings in man, — tell me, do you have an ideal of perfection among your loftiest moral conceptions of whose heavenly birth you are most satisfied? do you have among your loftiest conceptions an ideal of holiness reaching beyond the one now before you? Such obedience, exercised by such a personage, under such circumstances, with such immediate prospects, for such a purpose, — can your imagination stretch beyond it? Do you not feel now like replying, “ And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth”? Is it not the image of the invisible God? Ay! It is too holy to have originated anywhere but in heaven. It



flows down in streams with the tender mercies of God. Well, Christ hath left us an example, that we should follow his footsteps. To him it was a hard task to obey, for he was left alone. To us it will be a delightful one, through his gracious presence and help, provided we do not make delight and comfort the condition of our obedience and submission. "Obey my voice, saith Jehovah, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people."

IV. When the anguish of the Saviour had reached the highest pitch sustainable by a human frame, then the heavens opened, and an angel descended to strengthen him. It might, perhaps, appear to some that not consolation, but merely supernatural strength to continue and sustain the contest, was sent. (Compare Luke 22: 43, 44.) This may have been true. Still, after the last summons of Christ to his disciples, to awake and prepare for the enemy's approach, when Judas and his band drew near, we find Christ collected and calm in his mind, and clothed with a dignity so superior to human as to prostrate the rude hirelings of the High Priest to the ground. Hence, I infer that the strength sent to him from above included comfort of mind, consciousness of his character, assurance of his ultimate success, and whatsoever was needed to prepare him for his last hours, so as to enable him in one holy and decisive encounter to foil the malicious combination of incarnate devils on earth, and the crowning effort of Satan's subtilty and strength, whose hour and power was now fast drawing near.

So the twenty-second and the sixty-ninth Psalms, and the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, as they paint the sufferings of the Messiah, throw character and dignity around his sacred person, and crown him with victory at last. No profane eye ought to have seen him in that disconsolate condition; and none did

see him in it. Before the infernal band draws near, God has comforted his suffering child; and there he stands, with the meek and gentle majesty of a superior being, dressed in the formidable armor of holiness, with that calm greatness of heavenly love beaming from his eyes which remains the conquering queen of hearts, and forces veneration and worship from the wickedest wretch, even when herself under the heel of brute force. The black cloud, the roaring thunder, the lightning and the hail, the howling storm, are past, and the blue heavens of the divine favor, and the shining countenance of his Father's love, smile again. And, O! what could he wish for more? what peril, what fate could he not meet, under his heavenly Father's approving smiles?

Blessed be God, whose government beams with wisdom, justice and love! "The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord, and in thy salvation shall he greatly rejoice! Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah. He asked life of thee, and thou givest it him, even length of days forevermore." But not only love to his dear, only-begotten Son prompted him to send his messenger of consolation to Gethsemane; love to a perishing world was another motive, and I may well say here it was the grand one, for which may eternal glory surround his blessed throne! After all, my brethren, he knew his dear, holy child must expire under the burden of our sins. "Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness" for sinners. His son Jesus must die, whether on the cold, damp ground of Gethsemane, or on the accursed tree on Golgotha; — after all, what difference, what choice, was there between these two alternatives? And as for Jesus, if he was willing to become obedient even unto the death of the cross, surely he would have been willing also to become obedient unto

a death upon the ground. But in that law, which will stand when heaven and earth shall have passed away, it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them;" and again it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Christ *must* die on the cross, on the accursed tree; the antitype of the brazen serpent must be raised high to sprinkle kings and nations with his blood, and pour down healing and eternal life upon a guilty world. Amen, and amen, our inmost souls reply! Go on, go on, thou Friend of dying sinners! Complete the blessed work begun that our souls may live. God speed thee, O, thou conqueror over death and hell! Break, by thy powerful and victorious cross, the strong bars of our eternal prison! Then ride forth and prosper, and our souls shall follow hard after thee; and while we have a breath to draw, if we are here below, we will profess and proclaim thy love and thy name before the world; if we are in heaven above, we will sing songs of immortal gratitude and praise to thee, till eternity shall be no more! Amen.



## V.

### CAPTURE, ARRAIGNMENT AND CONDEMNATION OF CHRIST.

And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the Chief Priests, and Scribes, and the Elders.

And straightway in the morning the Chief Priests held a consultation with the Elders and Scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate. And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering, said unto him, Thou sayest it. And the Chief Priests accused him of many things; but he answered nothing. And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee. But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled. Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection. And the multitude, crying aloud, began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them. But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? For he knew that the Chief Priests had delivered him for envy. But the Chief Priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye, then, that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? And they cried out again, Crucify him. Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him. And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified. And the soldiers led him away into the hall called Pretorium; and they called together the whole band. And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it



about his head, and began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews ! And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees, worshipped him. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.—MARK 14 : 43 to 15 : 20. Compare MATTHEW 26 : 47 to 27 : 31 ; LUKE 22 : 47 to 23 : 25 ; JOHN 18 : 3 to 19 : 16.

WE now come to the history of the capture, arraignment and condemnation, of our Lord. The passages of Holy Writ which I have read contain the account of that event as related in the Evangelist St. Mark. The proper text for this discourse would again have been a harmony of the four Evangelists on the subject in hand ; or you might have expected, at least, that, as I have done heretofore, I should now also supply the deficiency of the Evangelist from whom I have borrowed my text by the additional information with which the other three Evangelists favor us, and then arrange the subject of our Meditation under distinct heads, and proceed to my remarks. This, however, cannot be done, in the present instance. This part of our Lord's history is so closely connected, that it seems to be incapable of any division which would not much rather deserve the name of laceration, while, on the other hand, it is of such a length, and in various places seemingly so discrepant, that a harmony of the four Evangelists, and an exhibition of the event as it results from their joint testimony, must needs occupy near the length of a whole discourse, although the most rigid economy of time and the greatest conciseness of style be united to keep it within the narrowest possible bounds.

Yielding to these circumstances, I resolved at last to devote the whole of the present discourse to the plain exhibition of our story, permitting myself only such explanatory remarks as may serve to give it all the fulness to which our sources of information and the limits of a discourse permit us to

attain ; in which remarks, however, I shall the more willingly indulge (and be indulged in by my hearers also, I hope), that we may have the more spiritual improvement as we go along. And if, at the close of this Meditation, it shall appear to us that our suffering Lord, in his crown of thorns on his bleeding head, in his purple robe thrown over his lacerated breast and shoulders, is a subject on which our hearts would delight to dwell still further ; and if I can obtain some assurance that divine aid will be still vouchsafed to me in meditating upon this delightful theme, I shall, if I live and the Lord please, make *Him* the exclusive subject of our next Meditation, and then dismiss the theme upon which we are now entering.

While Jesus made his last effort to rouse his disciples to watchfulness and prayer, Judas and his band entered the gate of the farm, and proceeded, as it seems, directly to the place where Christ and his disciples used to rest. The band consisted of a number of Roman soldiers, and a great multitude (Matthew 26 : 47 ; Mark 14) of officers, or servants (John 18 : 3) from the High Priests and the elders of the people. They had " lanterns and torches " (John), which shows that the night was a dark one (John 13 : 30), though the moon was now at the full. They were armed with " swords and staves " (Matthew and Mark), to be ready for a violent onset in case resistance should be offered. To prevent all mistakes, and to give more efficiency to the great expedition, some of the Chief Priests (that is, some who had been such in times past) and some of the captains of the temple came with them. (Luke 22 : 52.) The Roman soldiery, however, were the proper executors in this case ; and as they, of course, had no personal acquaintance with Christ, and probably never saw him before, it was necessary that the person to be apprehended

should be pointed out to them on the spot; a caution which the darkness of the night rendered still more necessary. Judas, who marched at the head of the band, and who was the pilot of the whole enterprise, showed himself forward to do what, indeed, he was most fit for, and to mark to them their victim by a kiss, which was then the highest mark of friendship and pious affection, as various passages in Paul's writings clearly show. Against most critics, I assume that the soldiers were Romans; not only because they evidently did not know Christ, while the servants or guard of the temple must have known him; but also because they are called *στῆλα* band (John 18 : 3), which always marks the Roman soldiery in the New Testament; because (John 18 : 12) they have a *χιλιαρχος*, or captain over a thousand, also an expression never applied to the captains (*στρατηγοὶ*) of the temple; because, in the same verse, the band and its captain over a thousand are distinguished from the servants of the Jews; because (according to Luke 22 : 52) there were several captains of the temple on the spot, while only one captain over a thousand was present; again, because Christ, coming to his disciples the last time after he arose from prayer, says, "The Son of Man is (about to be) betrayed into the hands of sinners," or heathen (compare Matthew 20 : 19 and the parallel passages); and finally, because the High Priests evidently wished to do all they could to secure their victim, while the Roman governor would naturally assist them in the prosecution of persons designated by them as dangerous. Instances where the heads of religious sects prosecute their dissenting church-members by means of a secular power, whose religious sentiments are equally against either party, are still so numerous in these countries, that we need not go very far to illustrate, to a most surpassing degree of satisfaction, the



proceedings of the High Priests and elders in the present instance.

Our Lord, knowing that his enemies are at hand, does not await their full approach ; but, leaving his disciples, meets at a small distance the band, who may have been looking this way and that way among the trees, lest, having perceived their approach, our Lord should make his escape. Calm, and with becoming dignity, he asks them, Whom seek ye ? Some of the Jews, probably not distinguishing him at the moment, answer, " Jesus of Nazareth." " Jesus saith unto them, *I am he.*" And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them ; but he stands aghast, as it seems, not able to gather up courage that moment to fulfil his iniquitous engagements. " As soon, then, as he had said unto them, *I am he*, they went backward and fell to the ground." (John 18 : 6.)

There was certainly nothing terrifying in the words of our Lord. How, then, was the " great multitude," as Matthew calls them, all at once prostrated ? After all the attempts to explain away the force of this passage, the only reasonable answer remains this : they were prostrated by the divine dignity of the Saviour's word and appearance, under whose tremendous weight, if unveiled, no created being would have been able to stand up. It was a ray of the inaccessible light of supreme power and majesty, which shot through these miserable worms of the dust. Christ, speaking to the Jews, probably spoke Hebrew to them. The only words he could use in the present instance are, "*I am he.*" But this expression had already acquired a deep and sacred meaning, by the manner in which it is used several times in the Old Testament. A few examples will be in place here. Isaiah 41 : 4,—"*I am Jehovah, the first and the last — I am he ;*" chap. 43 : 13,—"*Yea, before the day was*" (or, better,



before there was any day) "I am he, and there is none that can deliver out of my hand. I will work and who shall let it?" and chap. 48: 12,— "Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last." Pronounced with emphasis, then, the expression must have been in the highest degree awful and imposing to a Jew. And what makes me think that our Lord did utter it with emphasis is, that he had already done so on some former occasions. (John 8: 58.) "Jesus said unto them (the Jews), Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him,"— well aware that this was saying more than a mere man ought to say of himself. Had he been a mere man, it would have been blasphemy. And the same is probably also true in reference to verse 24,— "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Struck through with awe, High Priests, servants, temple soldiers, and the band, start back and fall to the ground. Nor did they rise again without his permission, which, however, he readily gave. For he now veils again the terrors of his glory; he asks them once more, but in tempered accents, Whom seek ye? And when they make out to answer again as before, he rejoins, "I have told you that I am he (probably now omitting the emphasis); if, therefore, ye seek me, let these (pointing at his disciples) go their way." This containing a tacit permission to the band and the Jews to take him, they rise from the ground, probably some smiling, some angry, at their superstitious fears, as they thought them to be, just as the ungodly worldling always does when the solemn time of divine visitation and rebuke is over. Judas, too, now gets over his fears, which at first seemed to check him, and, true to his father, the devil, even where it was no more necessary (for Christ had made

himself known), he lays hold of our Lord, and, kissing him, exclaims, "Hail, Master!" "Then they laid their hands on him, and took him," "and bound him," as John adds. Some of the disciples ask Christ whether they ought to offer resistance. Peter, without waiting for an answer, and to show some of his promised courage, cuts off the ear of the High Priest's servant; which deed Christ disapproves, and, healing instantly the servant, merely remarks to the High Priests, the captains of the temple, and the elders, "Be ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves?" (Luke 22: 52.) "When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me; but this is your hour and the power of darkness." (Matt. 26: 56.) "But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all his disciples forsook him, and fled;" probably terrified by some, who attempted taking vengeance on them for the suggestion of resisting by force, and the deed of Peter. Christ being bound, and the disciples having escaped, the company returns without delay. (Mark 14: 51.) "A young man," probably belonging to the people on the farm, endeavors to follow Christ; but, being violently seized by the band, leaves his garments in their hands, and flees. Peter and John (John 18: 15) soon return from their flight, and follow the procession at a distance.

The first house at which they called was that of Annas. Annas had been High Priest a short time ago, but was deposed by Valerius, and his son-in-law, Caiaphas, occupied the station now. The reason of their stopping at this house was probably this. Annas was an old man, who did not wish to go to the council at so late an hour, unless he was sure that Christ was there; and, as his house was probably so situated that the company had to pass by him, in proceeding to

Caiaphas, he may have requested the leaders of the band to call in passing, that he might follow the procession to the house of his son-in-law, where the council was assembled.

The larger houses in Jerusalem used to form a square enclosing a yard of the same shape, in which guests were often received, especially when numerous, and when public business was transacted. Into this yard of Caiaphas' house the band entered, and it was there where the Sanhedrim had convened at this time; for, to go to the temple, where a large room was appropriated for such conventions, was probably considered improper at this hour.

John, who seems to have enjoyed the favor of the High Priest, although he followed Christ, entered soon after, and procured permission for Peter to enter likewise. That the High Priest should have been so indulgent with John, may have been owing to his youth, or to relationship, or to the frequent gifts which the old, wealthy and devoted Zebedee used to send from his net to the kitchen and table of his holiness, or to many other circumstances which we cannot now divine. Somewhat near to the door, the servants had kindled a fire, to warm themselves. To this fire Peter resorted, probably to hide himself among the crowd, in order to escape public notice; while John seems to have been sitting or standing solitary at a short distance, that the noise and idle talk of the soldiers and servants might not hinder him from listening to the proceedings of the council. These proceedings were indeed absorbingly interesting in various respects; and we will ourselves turn our attention to them, without delay.

The whole Sanhedrim, and no small number of other individuals, all enemies of Christ, were present; and Christ stood before them bound, and ready for the trial. The regular method, according to the law of Moses and their own tradi-



tions, would have been to bring forward and examine the witnesses against him. There was, however, a difficulty of no small consequence in the way of doing so. *They had no witnesses to examine, and no crime to charge him with* ; and Caiaphas must have been at a loss, indeed, how to open the examination. Hence, to extricate himself, if possible, and perhaps with a hope to catch something out of our Lord's own mouth (John 18: 19) which might be turned against him, the High Priest begins by asking Christ himself "of his disciples and of his doctrine." This was a proceeding in various respects objectionable. It was against all principles of equity and good sense, which never require a man to criminate himself; it was against the law of Moses, and against their own acknowledged tradition; and, what is more than all this, it reflected upon the character of Christ, intimating that he might have secret machinations and plans to reveal and to confess,—a miserable and iniquitous contrivance to cover the dishonorable fact that they had not whereof to accuse him in any lawful way. The reflection contained in the address was the chief thing which drew forth the meekly defensive but energetic answer of our Lord. To suffer wrong he was come, and he was willing to suffer it and did so; but reflections upon his character, which was to become the foundation of all saving faith through all generations to come, he was not called to tolerate,—he never did and never will tolerate them. Nor was it a hard matter to clear it. He had taught among them full three years publicly before them and all the people, and there were men enough present who had heard and disputed with him on all the great topics of biblical and rabbinic learning, and controversy, and doubt; they were both able and willing to testify against him, had they known what to say. Why did none of these sanctimonious zealots open his



mouth and accuse him boldly now, when there was the most perfect security and a lawful opportunity to do so? A firm answer was absolutely called for here, and it was given. (John 18: 20, 21.) "Jesus answered him, I spake openly before the world; I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret I have said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them, which heard me, what I have said unto them; behold, they know what I said."

By this reply the mouth of the Sanhedrim is stopped; but an officious servant, violating both divine and human laws, smites Christ in his face in the presence of a civil and ecclesiastical board, adding to this rude insult the inconsistent charge of irreverence towards the High Priest; which new reflection upon his character and conduct our Lord repels for the same reason, and with the same meekness and firmness, as before. "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil (prove it); but if well, why smitest thou me?" The artful contrivance to make our Lord criminate himself having failed, false testimony is resorted to. But in the council of the Most High it was decided that the character of his Son should remain even without the shadow of a blemish, and the synagogue of Satan without the shadow of an excuse. To render the testimony of two witnesses valid, they must be separated, else their testimony is not a testimony, but a plot; though it is by no means certain that this was done in the present instance. However this may be, God divided their tongues; their testimony was discordant, whilst its falsehood was, even aside from the disagreement of the witnesses, as clear as noon-day. (Matt. 26: 59, 60.) "Now the chief priests and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death, but found none; yea, though

many false witnesses came, *yet* found they none (that agreed). At last came two false witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days." So Matthew; — Mark, probably giving us the testimony of the other witness in question, makes the testimony run thus (Mark 14: 58): "We have heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands; — but neither so did their witnesses agree together," the Evangelist adds. Now, had these charges been both harmonious and true, no sentence of death could lawfully have been passed upon Christ on their account; for they are mere charges of boasting, and are evidently allegorical; though, as they were, they gave each other openly the lie, and were barefaced perversions of John 2: 19, where our Lord speaks of his own body under the metaphor of the temple. "Destroy this temple," he says to the Jews there, meaning his body, "and in three days I will raise it up." Nor did the infuriated Sanhedrim dare to build any verdict upon these accusations, and the High Priest was brought again to the dire necessity of addressing another senseless and perfectly uncalled-for question to the innocent and defenceless victim of their rage. Rising up, in the anguish of his soul, in the midst of the council, he asked Jesus, saying: "Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee?" — as though mighty accusations had been brought forward, and there was now occasion for refutation and vigorous defence. The answer which our Lord gave him was, indeed, the most powerful one which the circumstances admitted of. (Matthew 26: 63.) "But Jesus held his peace." The import of this significant silence was plain, and it was confounding and mighty. What need is there (for this is the meaning of it) of my replying to

these open, self-contradictory lies, which even you cannot and do not believe, nor dare to sentence me on their account? (Mark 14 : 61.) “But he held his peace, and answered nothing.”

Now the Sanhedrim was in great straits. All the night had been spent in examining false witnesses to no purpose, and an evil fate seemed to confound and subvert every artful contrivance of the seventy wise men of Jerusalem, and of all their hirelings and satellites. Already the morning began to dawn ; those members of the Sanhedrim and other influential men who had remained at home during the night were now gathering in fast ; the matter must be brought to the issue (compare Luke 22 : 66) ; the unwelcome sun, with hastening steps, pressed hard upon them. The latest time to finish the hard task was at hand ; and yet the detested, feared, hated young Rabbi stood still in the midst of them, alone, with his hands bound, defenceless and meek, but firm, inculpable, unconvicted, unconquered, unconquerable ; and their cause was more desperate than when they set out. They ask him, “Art thou the Christ ? tell us.” He replies, “You are fully settled in your unbelief as to *that* question. If I should say yes, you are conscious yourselves that you have no intention either to believe my word or to release me. Why, then, ask so idle a question ?” (Luke 22 : 67, 68.) Thus they were disappointed again. There they were, sitting about, silent, with exhausted heads and blushing countenances, put to flight by the innocence of their defendant, and fairly at their wits’ end. Then the High Priest, cutting his way through right and wrong to the blood and murder of that man against whom neither true nor false witness would avail, said unto Jesus (Matthew 26 : 63), “I adjure thee,” that is, I cause thee to swear, “by the living God ;” “tell us whether thou be the



Christ, the Son of God?" This form, added to a proposed question, put the person to whom it was addressed under obligation to reply under the most solemn oath, if he answered at all. Christ did answer — and what? (Matthew 26 : 64), "Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said," — that is, it is so, I am he. "Moreover, I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power," — that is, of God Almighty, — "and coming in the clouds of heaven" to judge and reign over this world, and to manage the affairs of the universe. The places of the Old Testament which Christ has in view here, and which give us the full import of his reply, you find in Psalm 110, and Daniel 7 : 13, 14. The first reads thus : "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." And the other, "I saw in the night visions ; and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory and kingdom (not a kingdom, as our version says), that all people, nations and languages, should serve him : his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away ; and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Here some of the most unbelieving critics agree that the Messiah is spoken of, and his divine nature asserted. And Christ applies the passages to himself under oath. I am overwhelmed at the thought ! Where is now the miserable accommodation system of unbelieving men, who tell us that Jesus conformed wisely to the superstitions of his age, and, in order to gain a salutary and lawful influence among the Jews, pretended to be just that fabled Messiah the vain expectation of whose coming occupied their vacant and sensual minds ? Where is it ? It is blown to ten thousand tatters by the force of this single



passage. Christ has established his divine character upon the most solemn oath conceivable; and he is either a perjured blasphemer, or he sits now upon the throne of glory in heaven, and will come to judge the world in righteousness, and reign from the rising to the setting sun for ever and ever. And you, all the enemies of his universal kingdom, or you, cold and thoughtless despisers of his dying love! tremble at the greatness of his character and his power, and at the gloom and terror of your hastening doom. Either Christ is now in the lowest hell suffering the punishment of his false oath, or you must ere long go there, confounded by his sovereign and righteous sentence, and struck down by the thunderbolts of his omnipotence!

But some one might ask, Was it proper that Christ should establish his divine character *by an oath*? The answer is, He had done so already, before he came in the flesh. Is. 45: 22, 23,—“I am God, and there is none else. *I have sworn by myself*; the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow.”

But we must return to our story. On hearing the reply of our Lord, the High Priest, taking the very thing in question for granted, and assuming, against all propriety and good sense, that Jesus was not the Messiah, pronounced him a blasphemer, and, hiding his infernal joy under the mask of pious horror, rends his garment. Matt. 26: 65, etc.—“He hath spoken blasphemy,” he exclaims; “what further need have we of witnesses?” (thus confessing that they had no witness, in fact). “Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think you? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him, and others smote him with the palms of their hands” (covering his

countenance), "saying, Prophecy unto us then, Christ, who is he that smote thee?" In these abuses the servants continued until the time was come to proceed to Pilate, while the Sanhedrim retired, to take further counsel what to do next with him. His death was unanimously agreed upon. In the mean time Peter denies his Lord; but a reproving, forgiving look of his suffering Master restores the perishing soul to repentance and life. Want of time forbids us to attend in particular to this interesting subject. Of Judas Iscariot, too, we have only time to say that he was evidently present all the night. It was about this time that he approached the Sanhedrim, confessing his guilt and desiring them to take their money back. On receiving a spiteful answer from them, he is driven to despair, and, instead of casting himself now at his Master's feet, runs by him, right to the temple, where he throws down the reward of blood, and, procuring a rope, goes and hangs himself. The cord, being too feeble, breaks, and he is prostrated from some considerable height; his body bursts and his bowels gush out to the ground, while his poor soul goes "to her own place."

We now hasten to the judgment-hall of Pilate, to which Christ, still bound, was hurried, as soon as the rising sun promised admittance at that criminal court. Careful not to defile themselves, the Jews refused to enter into the judgment-hall, and the Roman governor was humane enough to come out to them to hear their cause. Conscious that they had nothing whereof to accuse Christ, they first endeavor to overawe the governor by the authority and dignity of their Sanhedrim; and when he asks them, "What accusation bring ye against this man?" they proudly reply, "If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him and

judge him according to your law. The Jews, therefore, said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death."

According to the traditions of the Jews themselves, the power of capital punishment was removed from the Sanhedrim about forty years before the destruction of the temple (that is, about this time). The reasons of this, and the manner in which it was done, we are unable to ascertain. The probability is, that the growing influence of the Roman governor, and the declining and degenerating character of the Sanhedrim, rendered proper, and gradually introduced, such a change. About this time, this law, by which the Sanhedrim was deprived of the power of capital punishment, was a new thing, and not yet carried quite into execution. This throws light upon the difficulties of our passage. The governor, not very anxious to settle the religious quarrels of the synagogue, was rather willing to leave it to them according to the *old* custom, unless they could show cause why the sentence of death should be passed; while the careful Jews were unwilling to take the responsibility upon themselves, and appeal to the *new* regulation. Indeed, that this was the state of things then is implied in the remark which John adds to this part of the story. According to that remark, the cause was not transmitted to Pilate entirely in the common and regular course of business, but "that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled" (that is, that he should be delivered into the hands of the heathen). (Matt. 20 : 19.) The governor having refused to condemn Christ *without a cause*, the Jews (Luke 23 : 2) begin "to *accuse* him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation and forbidding to give tribute to Cesar, saying, that he himself is Christ, a king.' What an open falsehood this was, is too plain to be proved. Had not Christ most positively *approved* of their giving tribute? How well



Pilate knew his men, and how little he believed their statements, will appear from his own conduct. Indeed, if we think of the placid and meek countenance of our Lord (for the countenance is the mirror of the mind, unless consummate hypocrisy dwells within), and of the impression which his whole appearance was calculated to make, what more powerful refutation of *such a charge* is there conceivable than just his mere *presence*, his looks, and the expression of his eye? "When he was accused of the Chief Priests and Elders, he answered nothing. Then saith Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him never a word, insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly" (Matthew 27: 12—14.) How much this part of Christ's conduct was calculated to show his innocence, and how far his disposition was from that of a rebel against the government, I need not tell you, nor did it escape the attention of Pilate.

Upon this indictment, Pilate, far from believing it, takes Christ with him into the judgment-hall, to examine him further. "Art thou the King of the Jews?" he asks him. (John 18: 33.) To which our Lord replies more largely than we should have expected, showing that his silence on the outside was owing neither to stubbornness nor to insensibility. "Sayest thou this thing of thyself," is his answer, "or did others tell it thee of me?" (v. 34) that is, I appeal to thyself whether this question is prompted by thy own impression or conviction. Do I look like an aspiring, daring outlaw and opposer of government? Is it not the clamor of the Jews which makes thee ask this question? To which Pilate replies, "Am I a Jew?" (v. 35.) I live in no expectation of a Jewish king. To be sure, "thine own nation and the Chief Priests have delivered thee unto me;



what hast thou done?" Thou must, after all, have committed some crime! To this Christ answers again: "To the former question, whether I am a king, I reply, I am a king Yet not a temporal one. My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews. (v. 36.) My very condition shows the nature of my kingdom." Pilate perfectly understood the meaning of Christ by an easy reference to some popular maxims of the Stoics, and, taking him for an innoxious but eccentric personage, he answers, probably smiling, "Art thou a king, then?" Is it not true, after all, that thou art a king? (v. 37.) But Christ, preserving dignity, replies, "Thou sayest (right) that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." Then Pilate, showing his scepticism, exclaims, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, says John, he went again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. (v. 38.) But "they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place." So Luke 23 : 5. They purposely and invidiously mention Galilee, as that province was renowned particularly for the seditious disposition of its inhabitants. On further inquiry, Pilate is informed by the Jews that the prisoner is a Galilean, and knowing that Herod Antipas, under whose jurisdiction he consequently belonged, was just then at Jerusalem on account of the feast, he sends them all there, glad to get rid of this unwelcome business.

To anticipate the kind of reception with which Christ was to meet there, it is sufficient to remember that this was the same Herod who had married his own brother's wife, and

upon whom the faithful and solemn entreaties and instructions of John the Baptist had been worse than lost. Crime had seared his conscience, and dissipation and self-conceit had debased his heart. The thoughtless sensualist, equally circumscribed in influence and intellect, was accustomed to feed deliciously upon the gross flatteries of empty-headed courtiers, and upon banqueting, revelry, and the mean and silly tricks of travelling jugglers. He was now "exceedingly glad" (Luke 23: 8) to see Jesus, and had been long desirous to see him; and he hoped he would have "seen some *miracle* done by him" to gratify his idle curiosity. Hence he condescended to question the poor prisoner "in many words;" while the Jews, on the other hand, trembling for their perishing cause, poured a stream of complaints and lies into his ear, about the criminality of this his dangerous and aspiring subject. And it is delightful to observe that our blessed Lord did cast not so much as one pearl before that man, nor open his mouth once to clear his character from charges which carried their refutation with them. "But he answered him nothing," says Luke. One knave will easily find out another. Herod was perfectly prepared to appreciate the motives of the High Priests and Jews, and the weight of their testimony, of which he never believed a word; but, provoked and offended by the becoming conduct of Christ, he begins to revile him, in which he is duly assisted by his courtiers, who of course admired everything he did and said. (Luke 23.) They "set Christ at naught," and arraying him gorgeously in a white robe, they sent him and his disappointed prosecutors back to Pilate. "And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together; for before they were at enmity between themselves." (v. 12).

Ah! the matter fares miserably for the Jews. The sun

risers higher and higher, the holy feast draws near ; two courts of justice (so called) have, on the whole, pronounced the defendant innocent, and yet he must be despatched *soon* ; for if his numerous friends learn that he is on trial, they may inquire into the matter, and then the venerable Sanhedrim will appear to no singular advantage. It is plain they must prevail on *Pilate* now to kill him ; and succeed they *must*, or their character and influence are at an end.

Determined to carry their purpose through, they arrive again before the judgment-hall of Pilate. But Pilate is rather strengthened in his purpose not to yield, and begins to plead the cause of innocence himself to some extent. It was, moreover, about this time that his wife sent unto him, communicating to him a dream about which her own mind was much exercised, and which had, according to her opinion, reference to the present affair, and contained a warning to Pilate not to stain his conscience with the murder of this just person. “ Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people ; and behold I have examined him before you, and have found no fault in this man, touching those things whereof ye accuse him ; no, nor yet Herod ; for I sent you to him ; and lo ! nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him and release him. (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.) And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man and release us Barabbas, who, for a certain sedition made in the city and for murder, was cast into prison. Pilate therefore, still willing to release Jesus, spake again unto them in his behalf. But they cried, saying, Crucify him ! And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done ? I have found no cause of death in him. I will therefore chastise him and let him go. And they were *instant with loud*



*voices* requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the Chief Priests prevailed," waxing stronger and stronger. Then took Pilate Jesus and scourged him, against his own better knowledge and conscience, hoping by that affecting scene to touch the tiger-hearts of the mob. And after having scourged him, the soldiers placed a crown of thorns and put it on his head; and they put a purple robe upon him, and said, tauntingly, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. Pilate, therefore, hoping now to effect his weak purpose, went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth (stripped of his garments, scourged and bleeding), wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! the poor sufferer, who has done no harm! Let it be enough now of revenge and cruelty! But when the Chief Priests and the officers saw him, they cried out,—horror strikes me as I rehearse it,—“Crucify him, crucify him!” Pilate shrinks with terror from the thought,—“Take *ye* him,” he says, “and crucify him; *for I find no fault in him.*” The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.” Another falsehood. They have no such law, and never did have anything like it. They could not have had it. According to this law they would have been obliged to crucify their own expected Messiah, who, by the tenor of the second Psalm, was acknowledged by *themselves* to be the Son of God. And ah! had they had such a law, how carefully would they have preserved it to the present day! Upon this, Pilate, terrified and amazed, leads Christ once more into the judgment-hall, and asks him, “Whence art thou?” but receives no answer. The time of



our Lord was now come. The last word of self-defence was uttered. Then saith Pilate unto him, "Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee and have power to release thee?" To which our Lord replies in substance, *Thou* hast no power over me except by a particular divine dispensation. Nor do I blame thee so much; those who delivered me unto thee, they will bear the chief curse. Overcome by this remark, so full of meaning, Pilate determines to make still further efforts to save him. "But the Jews cried out, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend. Whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar!" (v. 12.) "When Pilate heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat, in a place that is called the Pavement" (v. 13). Desirous and decided now to make an end, but still anxious to save the sufferer, and showing that their last remark did not affect him, he says, "Behold your king!" But they cried out, "Away with him, away with him! crucify him!" Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your king? (appealing to their national pride). The Chief Priests answered, "We have no king but Cæsar." Then, "when Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it! Then answered all the people and said, His blood be on us and on our children." (Matt. 27: 24, etc.) "Then delivered he him unto them to be crucified." The insults and abuses of the soldiers and others then seem to have begun afresh with redoubled fury (compare Matthew 27: 27), and preparations for his execution were fast making.

Numerous reflections now press upon me. But our time

is elapsed. However, I will close with a few hints to those who may wish to dwell upon this story still more to-day.

1. It was not only a murder on the part of the Jews, but it was a conscious and deliberate murder, and one, too, which required a most surprising degree of determination and desperate perseverance.

2. Pilate presents us with a most instructive example of the folly and wickedness of a time-serving spirit; though his fine sensibilities make him more an object of sympathy and pity than of that abhorrence in which he is generally held by good people. Herod deserves no attention, and the lesson we can learn of him may be learned of any one epicurean wretch of the most common kind.

3. The character of our Lord was cleared to perfection by friends and foes; his conduct exhibits the *ideal of suffering holiness* beyond the stretch of human thought and invention, and is a more powerful proof of his being *more than man* than the whole assemblage of his miracles is or could be. While he suffers, he is the perfect conqueror of, and king over, all his accusers and judges, whether Jews or Gentiles.

4. He is a golden mirror to us who are Christians. This is the spirit for which we ought to ask, which we ought to seek,—nay, which we have, in a small degree indeed, but in a degree marked, perceptible and growing, if we are Christians in reality.

5. What he suffered he suffered for us; and, more than that, he suffered it *by* us; *we* were among the Jews, the High Priests, the band; we betrayed, caught, denied, scourged, murdered him. But we hope, some of us at least, that we have sincerely repented, and received the pardon of our sins, and a new heart. May this be so! For, if it

should prove false, then shall we go, ere long, to that place where those High Priests, captains, Jews, Herod, Judas, Annas, Caiaphas, and perhaps Pilate, have been near eighteen hundred years, weeping and gnashing their teeth; and where they will weep and gnash their teeth until their innocent victim shall cease to sit "on the right hand of power."

## VI.

### BEHOLD YOUR KING.

Behold your king. — JOHN 19 : 14.

“Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.” Thus you are addressed by the sacred poet, who, when he wrote that “song of songs,” which [our adversaries being judges] is the most exquisite ever written, depicted with colors and images borrowed from conjugal love and tenderness those indissoluble and holy affections which unite Christ and the church. Whether the passage quoted has particular reference to the great marriage supper of the Lamb, yet to come, when “the holy city, New Jerusalem, shall come down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband;” or whether its object is to lead the pious heart to a devout consideration of Christ in the beauty of his sufferings, when he purchased with the ransom of his blood his beloved church, that he might present her to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; this, and all like questions, a Christian may safely leave to the critics, and, following the drawings of a sanctified heart, make such a use of it for himself as would



seem best to assist him in devotion, and to benefit and warm his heart.

I have used it to call your attention to the affecting spectacle which the suffering Jesus presented when Pilate led him forth, scourged, buffeted, spit upon, crowned with thorns and with an old scarlet mantle mockingly thrown upon him, vainly endeavoring to call forth the national pride of an abject, infuriated and reprobate priesthood and mob. A few moments previously, Pilate had made an attempt to excite their commiseration by leading forth our Lord when he was already in this affecting condition; but he found the tender mercies of the wicked cruel indeed. Then followed his equally unsuccessful appeal to their patriotism; and when this also failed, he delivered up Jesus to be crucified. Like unto Pilate, but with different motives and different feelings, I hope, and to a different assembly, I lead him forth. And, in doing so, what fitter words could I have used, to awaken the sensibilities of every pious heart, than the words of our sacred poet: "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion," etc.

Few and plain shall be my words to-day, beloved hearers. Learning is of all things the very last for which I could now wish. There are neither hard words nor hard things to be explained to-day. Nor do I even wish for the glowing imagination or the peering intellect of great men, or higher spirits. No! I want the humble, penitent, believing, loving, grateful, and devout heart; I want the plain, unvarnished impression of my subject; and then as much utterance as the plain impression itself would suggest, so that the fact may speak for itself. May I have every needed assistance and gift, in the performance of my present solemn task!

Christ, as he was led forth by Pilate, shall be the object of our prayerful attention at this time. To obtain a more

correct and complete impression of the spectacle, we shall have to look at it from three different points of view, as it were. Doing this, the subject will come before our minds under the following three divisions :

I. THE CONDEMNATION OF CHRIST AT THE BAR OF PILATE, AND THE SUFFERINGS HE EXPERIENCED THERE.

II. THEIR CAUSE.

III. THEIR EFFECT.

I. To attempt to make a correct and adequate impression upon you, as to the feelings of Christ when Pilate led him forth the last time, would indeed be a vain effort. Whatsoever may be the nature of enjoyment and suffering in other worlds, in this world it holds true throughout that they have very much of the relative and comparative in them; that is, here we feel satisfied and happy, or displeased and unhappy, in our present condition, very much in comparison to what we were in the habit of enjoying or suffering before; and hence it comes to pass, in the experience of every day, that the same combination of external circumstances which fills one with delight leaves another wholly unaffected, and presents a third one with the very ideal, as he thinks, of wretchedness and distress. A treatment which would elate the heart of a vain and ignorant slave creates no emotion in the breast of a free citizen, and would deeply wound the feelings of one who has, or thinks he has, a rightful claim upon universal veneration and worship, and who has been in the habit of enjoying them.

You readily apprehend what I am alluding to in these remarks. So far as Christ was divine; so far as his consciousness extended back into times, or rather into eternities, when he enjoyed the adoration and the praises of a holy and grateful universe, and felt himself absolutely unlimited and

supreme throughout his vast creation; so far as he knew, by an experience extending a whole eternity back, what it is to be God,—so far, it would be madness for us to struggle for a realizing sense of what he must have felt when standing before the raging mob in that most melancholy condition in which you know he then was. We can only speak of him as though he had been a mere man, and then remember that in view of his divine character we are standing at the shores of an unexplored ocean, of whose extent we have no conception.

In respect to his bodily frame, Christ must needs have been much affected by that agitation of mind which his approaching sufferings had occasioned him for some time past, and which no doubt had often robbed him of sleep, when all around him were sweetly resting and preparing for the duties of the morrow. More still must he have been reduced by the scene of Gethsemane, which, whatsoever particular views may be cherished of it by different men, must be granted by all to have been an awful and most unnatural and overwhelming mental distress. In Gethsemane, probably no more than five or ten minutes after he rose from prayer, he was bound and dragged back to Jerusalem, first to Annas' then to Caiaphas' house, where he was questioned and vexed, standing up all night, till about morning, when the examination was closed, and the remainder of the time was spent in buffeting, beating and abusing him, till the hour to apply to Pilate was come. Then he was thrust once more through the streets, to Pilate, and from thence, after considerable examination, to Herod. At Herod's court he was again queried and mocked, and then hurried back to Pilate again. After some efforts to release Jesus, Pilate, seeing the fury of the multitude, delivered him to the band of Roman soldiers, to be scourged. This they did; and being probably bribed by the Jews, they added to



the punishment ordered by law their own newly-invented inhumanities, plating a crown of thorns and pressing it upon his head, putting an old purple robe upon him, smiting him with their hands, and tauntingly saluting him as a king. And you may imagine what that meant, to have a band of rude soldiers round about him, who were paid for their barbarities, and who wreaked their savage, spiteful rage upon a poor Jew, as they thought him to be, and upon whom they would have much less compassion than upon some poor, suffering animal.

But the chastisement inflicted by order is already enough, in itself, to make one shudder. When a person was scourged previously to crucifixion, he was stripped of his garments, except something tied around the loins. In this condition he was fastened to a post or pillar, and beaten. The instrument of torture was a whip, with a large number of strings or thongs of leather, interlaced with little hooks, so as to immediately penetrate the flesh, and lay open every vessel which they touched. The Romans used to call it "*horibile flagellum*,"—the horrible whip,—and it was applied only to slaves. Such was the severity of this flagellation, that numbers of the stoutest and (as to bodily constitution) most hardened malefactors expired under it. It may assist us in getting an adequate idea of the barbarity of this punishment, when we remember that even the well-known inhuman Russian knout is fatal, unless the blows are purposely directed to the lungs, while the Roman whip carried death with it in not a few instances in its ordinary application.

I should doubtless be treading the footsteps of Pilate, if I endeavored to work upon your feelings by exaggerating the sufferings of Jesus in this instance, and by representing the soldiers as making peculiar efforts to render them severe, while I had no reason or ground so to do. But I can leave



it with any one of you to say whether those who invented even new tortures, and exulted in the agonies of their victim, to whom they showed not a spark of pity,—whether these men, I say, were at all likely to treat him with lenity, or to inflict upon him anything less than the utmost implied in the unrighteous charge of Pilate. Ah! there is not a shadow of ground for such a supposition; and we have to admit, as mere critics, the high probability that our Lord experienced a flagellation equal to anything ever executed of this kind. Indeed, this is even implied in Pilate's own words, when he brought him out to the people the first time, after the execution of his cruel order,—“Behold the man!” Behold the extraordinary, heart-dissolving sight, he wanted to say. Is he not scourged and lacerated enough now to satisfy your rage and your envy? Let the sight of your eyes affect your hearts, and let me now release him! How could Pilate have said so, if Christ had not exhibited a more pitiful spectacle than that witnessed at other times in similar instances? “Why,” the people could have answered him, “behold the man? what is there to behold?—we have seen a hundred culprits scourged like him, and more too; *that* is nothing worth beholding yet!” But they say no such thing. They admit the spectacle to be extraordinary, and merely keep roaring out, “Crucify him! crucify him!” And here let me just notice, in passing, the doubt entertained and repeated over and over again, by infidels, respecting the reality of Christ's death upon the cross. Even very lately it has been maintained that it was to the highest degree improbable that he really died, but that he to all appearance merely fell into a swoon, and was afterwards awaked again by the efforts of his friends, etc. How could he die in six hours, it is said, when others lived two, three, and even six and seven days

upon the cross, and either died of hunger, or were torn by wild beasts? But that many others did not even survive the flagellation, or, if they did, were treated with some degree of lenity, came to the punishment with robust constitutions, and were weakened by no previous agonizing struggles, is taken into no account by these men. To me it is a wonder that he did not expire under the hand of the soldiers; that he could stand yet upon his feet after the scourging; that he could walk out of the city; that he could for some time even bear his own cross; that he could mount up the hill of Golgotha, and at last endure full six hours upon the cross, conversing and praying to the end. To me it is in the highest degree probable that something more than the strength of his human frame was necessary to carry him through all these horrors; yes, something more. He could not be permitted to die in Gethsemane,—he could not, for the same reason, die in Pilate's hall; *he must die on the cross*, for (as I have already remarked formerly) it is written, "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them;" and again it is written, "cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." And it was only when that purpose was accomplished, and his last words were uttered, that the sustaining power withdrew, his frame yielded to the accumulated causes of dissolution, and he yielded up his spirit.

When, therefore, Christ was led forth by Pilate, he certainly presented a spectacle of suffering uncommon even in those days. His shoulders, his back, half his arms, and his breast, were lacerated by the whip, and, probably, in many places, to the very bones; his countenance was disfigured and swollen by the violent blows of the soldiers, which he had just received in addition to those already inflicted upon him by the

Jews the night previous; to his wounded left shoulder and breast and half his back was cleaving an old military cloak of purple, which was thrown upon him, and hooked, as the fashion then was, upon the right shoulder; in his hand he had a reed, mockingly alluding to the staves which the commanders of Roman armies and kings used to hold in their hands; and upon his head was fastened by repeated blows (compare Matthew 27: 30) a wreath of thorns, representing either a royal diadem, or perhaps the laurel wreath of a conqueror. And worthy of notice is the remark of a late and able commentator, that in reference to the crown of thorns some abatement should be made; because, had it been of pure thorns, he might have been mortally wounded by it, or at least must needs have fainted away under the torment. But where do you read of that abatement in Scripture? And to all this you will of course add the nudity and trembling of his limbs, the paleness of his body, the submissive meekness of his countenance, the anxious bosom heaving still with the apprehension of tortures to come; the agitation of his lungs, and the feverish excitement of his whole system, occasioned by the cruel flagellation.

Thus Pilate led him forth to the Jews. Thus I lead him forth to you; and I have no hesitation, in the words of the Roman governor, though in a far different sense, to exclaim, "Behold your King." To the world, I know, he has no form nor comeliness in this sad predicament; but to souls convinced of sin, and to the true believer, it is just so that he is the Chief among ten thousand and the One altogether lovely. O, yes! the more abused and dishonored for our sakes, the more unlovely to the world, the more a man of sorrows, the more bruised, stricken, smitten of God and afflicted, the more beautiful, the more lovely, the more ador-



able, he is to us. Know it, proud and haughty world, we are not ashamed of him so! No! And, O! may he never be ashamed of us! It is in the beauty of his sufferings that he is the object of our supreme affection. Thus he drew us in the day of his power, and we ran after him. It is thus that we love him and seek him on our beds in the night-season. And though we may often well say, "The watchmen that went about the city found me; they smote me; they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my vail from me;" yet we seek him still. And though we love him but little, yet, while we have a spark of faith and love in our hearts, we cease not to cry, "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him that I am sick of love." And if we have now and shall hereafter have any interest in him, it is just so that he is our delight in life, and will be our consolation in death, and our eternal song in heaven. Thus he is our King forevermore. Yes, our King! For while we see him in the very gulf of abject sufferings and distress, the eye of our faith can well discern the moral, heavenly beauty and perfection of the unique sight; our commiseration is quickly absorbed by admiration and humble worship; and our tears of sorrow and pity are quickly dried up by the fire of love and joy, and in a little while we can only weep the sweet tear of penitent affection and tender gratitude. True, we see a sufferer before us, bruised, abused, mocked, despised, and condemned to death; but we see an unconvicted, innocent sufferer, a holy sufferer, one who suffers freely and out of love to his enemies, a divine sufferer. Yes, he is our King,—he is our King. Know it, ye heavens above, and rejoice with us! He is our King! Know it, thou distracted world, and wonder, gainsay, and perish! He is our King!



Know it, hell beneath, and tremble to the very centre ! He is our King forevermore !

II. Thus far we have looked at the scene from a distance. We have, as it were, occupied an honorable place in the windows or gallery of some neighboring house, and the mad crowd before Pilate's door has been raving beneath our feet. But we must descend now, unexpected as it may be to you, my hearers, and humbling and mortifying as it may be to us all ; I must lead you down, and with you take a place among the Jews in the street below, and among the heathen soldiers in the judgment-hall. For we now inquire, What was the cause of our Lord's condemnation, flagellation and abuse, and who were the true agents in them ?

Here I answer, without hesitation, *Our sins were the cause — we were the agents.* Few words will be needed to establish that. An appeal to the word of God and to your own consciences will suffice, if anything can convince you.

Thus much is plain, that he was not condemned, scourged and mocked, because he had no means of resistance. He had them abundantly. As the Jews and their assistants did not seize and bind him and drag him away from Gethsemane because they were many and stout, and he alone and weak,—and as the Sanhedrim did not wrong and abuse him because they were the very strength of the nation at that time, so Pilate did not condemn him and deliver him up by the power and authority of his office, nor did the soldiers tie him to the pillar and subject him to the horrible whip because they had helmets on their heads, and shields and swords and spears about them, or because they were a band of muscular men, used to the battle. All this was not sufficient, nor could it have been made so by any multiplication whatsoever, to account for the event before us. No ! as twelve legions of

angels, and indeed all the hosts of heaven, were at the command of Christ in Gethsemane, so they were when he stood before Pilate, so they were when he writhed under the hands of his torturers in the judgment-hall. But even that help he did not need. One word from his lips did prostrate the whole band who came to seize him in the garden; another word would have laid all his enemies in and about the pretorium into the dust. He said to Pilate openly, Thou hast no power over me at all in the common course of things, but by a particular divine dispensation; and even Pilate felt the propriety of the remark. He was then what he always had been, and always will be. He who overthrew heavenly principalities, and consigned them to eternal chains of darkness, could have made both Pilate and Tiberius crouch before his feet. He who could hurl stars and worlds before his face as chaff, could have scattered that handful of his clamorous foes with a nod. It was, then, not the power of Pilate which condemned Christ, nor did the mere hands and fists of the Jews and the soldiers reduce him to that condition in which we find him to-day. The clamor of the Jews did not bring about his condemnation for being so overwhelming and so pertinacious. What, then, did it? you ask. If they were not the proper agents in the matter, what is the cause? who are the agents? where are they? I answer, with the prophet, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 53: 5.) Here is the mystery unravelled; here is the cause; here are the agents. Our sins did it; that is to say, *we did it*. We tormented and abused and crucified him. Like a lamb he entered in among us, a herd of grievous, starving wolves. "Here am I," he cried; "take me, tear me to pieces, eat my flesh, suck

my blood, if it can do you any good." We did tear him to pieces. And, blessed be God forever, his flesh does do us good; for it does satisfy our raging hunger; it is according to his own words, that bread which came down from heaven, and of which, if any man eat, he shall live forever. His blood! O yes! it does us good, for it "cleanseth from all sins."

My friends, I have led you down, and have put you among the raving Jews; and now I ask you, Is it not your appropriate place? Do you deserve a better one? I do not. It is but too true, you do not. We are no better than the adversaries and tormentors of Christ in our scene. When we were grovelling in that common, low, stupid impenitence which is the choice and condemnation of the mass of men, then did we stand among the satellites of the priests and elders, and cried, "Crucify, crucify him!" When we rose a little higher to polished and popular religious habits, and put on the beautiful embroidered garment of self-righteousness, or the toga of a vain philosophy,—when we sought to make good works, or some system of our own framing, upset and supplant the doctrine of the cross,—then did we sit in Caiaphas' house, worthy members of the Jewish Sanhedrim, and seeking false witness against Christ, but finding none. When we judged and condemned his people because they were imperfect, or when we conformed to the world, knowingly, and against our conscience, then did we deny him with Peter, and condemn him with Pilate. Our avarice often sold him for less than thirty pieces of silver; our desire to break away from every restraint of religion and of divine laws bound his hands and tied him to the dreadful pillar in the judgment-hall; our early youthful vanity stripped him of his simple and necessary garments; our pride, our aspiration to worldly greatness,



threw the purple robe over his shoulders and crowned him with thorns; our epicurean desires for everything which struck and allured our senses, and our wickedness in its ten thousand names and forms, laid the horrible whip over his tender body, and inflicted his numberless wounds upon him. We did it — we did it; and well might our souls melt with sorrow, and our eyes dissolve in tears. The man who can look at this picture without a tear has a heart of stone.

And now, my friends, I ask you, after you have done all this to your innocent Saviour, will you do so still? Will you still keep roaring out, “Crucify him!” Will you still betray, sell, deny, condemn, and bind him? Will you still buffet, and scourge him, and mock him? If so, then you are still among the Jews; you are one of the High Priests and elders; you sit down with the Sanhedrim, and with Pilate upon the judgment-seat; you are one of the rude and barbarous band of soldiers; and if you do not follow Judas in his death, you will certainly follow him in his doom, and take your place for a long eternity with all the enemies of Christ.

III. I now proceed to invite all those who have forsaken, or are willing immediately to forsake, the ranks of the enemies of Christ, to the consideration of our third topic.

Here we shall have to change our place once more. And it will, perhaps, be again quite unexpected to some of you, if I assign you not a more honorable place than that which you now so gladly leave, but a much less honorable one. Yes, the place we now take is much more mortifying, humbling, and despised, than the one we just occupied; but it is also much safer, and I think after a little while you will love to be there.

We now gather round about Barabbas, “who, for a certain



sedition made in the city and for murder, was cast into prison." (Luke 23 : 19.)

We need not blush to get into his company ; before the bar of God, we are already in it. He was a rebel against lawful civil authority ; he was a murderer ; he was caught and imprisoned, and awaited his sentence of death. If you take this definition of his character, life and condition, and, removing it from its political ground to the one of Jehovah's universal theocracy ; if you put God for Tiberius, the law of heaven and of all the universe for the Roman law ; if you put the Son of God and your own and a thousand other souls for simple man murdered, and for every transitory and finite relation, motive and consequence, in Barabbas' case, its corresponding eternal and spiritual reality,—then, what more faithful definition of our character and our lives as sinners, and of our situation as prisoners for the great day of account, can you desire, than that given by Luke to Barabbas ? We have rebelled against God, and broken his holy law ; we have slain our own souls, and have enticed others and assisted them to do the same to themselves ; we have crucified the Son of God ; we are seized and shut up in the hand of Omnipotence, and the dread day of account draws near. Before the bar of Pilate, indeed, we are not like Barabbas ; before the bar of God we are like him.

It is not easy to realize the emotions of Barabbas as he stood before Pilate's house, bound and ready to be condemned to crucifixion. What fluctuations of hope and fear, of joy and misgiving, must have agitated his breast, while the Jews strove for his release on the one hand, and Pilate employed every means of persuasion, on the other, to bring him into ruin ! One hour after another passed away ; neither party seemed to yield ; and even when he saw the young Rabbi so

severely scourged, Pilate's desire to save that man was not at all abated, and the avenging sword of justice remained still hanging over his own defenceless head. At last the crowd prevailed; Pilate, wearied and worn out, condemned the innocent; and he, the murderer, was dismissed unpunished.

Here the feelings of the upright man may be powerfully roused, and the most perfect abhorrence at the unjust proceedings of this arbitrary bar of so-called justice may fill his bosom. But the eye of faith doth not stop at the bar of Pilate. Back it wings its way, on the pinions of revelation, to that distant but momentous hour when the same cause was agitated in the court of heaven, though pleaded by very different pleaders; and was decided by the Judge of all in the same manner, though from motives as far above Pilate's as the heavens are high above the earth. Pilate's court and sentence are mere consequences of that, mere shadows of it thrown upon the pages of the history of our globe by a thousand refractions, in the fulness of time. You all remember the passage in the Revelation of St. John which speaks of the Lamb of God as slain "from the foundation of the world." This points to a judicial transaction in heaven which had reference to the redemption of our race. We know the issue; and of course we know, so far at least, also the decisions of that holy council.

A world had rebelled, and was fallen. The inviolable law was broken, and the world rebellious, being inhabited by immortal beings, the penalty of endless ruin must be exacted; for, if not endless, then the time of punishment, however long, must needs dwindle into a mere nothing in comparison to an eternity of bliss that would follow it, and therefore could subserve no purpose in deterring other unstable minds from transgressing the law still further; other equally moment-

ous considerations not to mention. Countless immortal minds and moral agents, apprized of the rebellion, must have been in awful suspense, whether the pledge of the supreme Lawgiver would now be redeemed, and the law magnified in the eternal destruction of a fallen world; or whether indefinite mercy would be extended to them, the law itself thus virtually abrogated, and the most alarming and irrevocable doubt and darkness thrown over the moral character of God, and the stability of his government,—the character of God, the only ground of hope, the only warrant for their holy joys through all eternity to come. Here was a dreadful alternative; a world to be devoured by eternal fire, or the peace of every holy being taken away. The latter being wholly inadmissible, the ruin of our guilty world seemed unavoidable. No created arm could save, but the uncreated arm could. Every sensitive being, as such, has private interests, which can be sacrificed not only with no impeachment to the moral character of the agent, but to his great honor and credit. Scripture and reason reveal God as a sensitive being. The Son of the Father could be given up, and give up himself; the Word could become flesh, and make a free, personal atonement for sinners. He was willing. Then stood this fallen world,—the rebel, the murderer, we among the rest, on one side, he on the other. Justice pleaded for him, mercy for us. Mercy rejoiced against judgment. The great fact of Redemption proves it, and shows the result and consequences of the holy session. Christ became surety to the broken law; the rebellious world was cleared. Hitherto the holy, zealous God, the just one who could not and would not clear the guilty, had been her offended Sovereign; now Christ, the Saviour, the friend of sinners, the Prince of peace, became her king exclusive, until that time when the whole

purpose of his incarnation shall be accomplished, and this world return to her primeval relation in the moral universe, not without an eternal connection with, and remembrance and worship of their Saviour from ruin. (Compare 1 Corinthians 15 : 24, &c., and Revelation 5 : 12, 13.) Christ thus became the dispenser of every mercy, and the disposer of every event and change, in the ancient dispensation ; and so he is now. He was the spiritual Rock that followed Israel in the wilderness (1 Corinthians 10 : 4) ; in him did the patriarchs and prophets believe and hope ; his Spirit they had, his servants they were. Methinks I see him led forth from the court of heaven after that solemn transaction ; and while he is presented to a trembling world of perishing sinners who had forfeited their blessed relation to a holy and just God, I hear the joyful proclamation made by angel choirs accompanied by the harpers of heaven harping with their harps, " Behold your King, behold your King, ye trembling sinners ! Take fresh courage, and strike up a joyful hymn of praise ! The great case is decided ; mercy has triumphed ; the sentence is passed, recorded, and sealed with the seal of eternity. Your sins are his ; his righteousness is yours ; and let every perishing sinner now gather up close to him who can and will save his soul from death."

My soul stands erect with joy ; my steadfast eye looks down into the prison of the arch-fiend, and my unfaltering voice demands, " Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect ? " I glance over the plains of heaven,—nor do I shrink as my eye approaches the cloud, and the darkness which hides from created eyes the consuming brightness of that inaccessible light in which God himself dwelleth,—and I ask, with a boldness tempered with humility and awe, but not with fear, " Who is he that condemneth ?"—But I look



also down to earth, and as I behold the bar of Pilate again, and there see the meek, lowly, innocent, the perfect, the holy, divine, maltreated Jesus, the very instant melts both heart and eye, and that all-conquering love which triumphed in heaven triumphs also in the sinful breast, and forth bursts the involuntary exclamation, "Who shall separate me from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" No, never! "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

I lead him forth once more,—“Behold your King.” Drink in, in draughts long and full, the precious impression of the scene. Every feature is a fountain of spiritual joys, and a storehouse of omnipotent motives to a holy life. Mark the paleness of his countenance, the sadness of his downcast eye, the sweat of anguish mingled with blood on his brow, and flowing down his breast and shoulders and arms; then turn to the fashionable vanities of this world, and they will appear as they ought,—“base as the dirt beneath your feet.” Look at the nudity of his insulted body, and see then how accumulated riches will appear! Bring hither all the pomp and dress, the crowns, purples and sceptres of earth, put them beside his crown of thorns, his ragged purple robe, and his reed, and say, if you could choose them, could you parade in them? Witness the meekness of his conduct, the silence of his lips while thousands cry out “Crucify him! Crucify him!” and then dare repine at sufferings for his name’s sake, and retort injuries to your persecutors! In one word, look at Him, and then attempt it, and follow the world again if you

can. I know you cannot, you will not. He who can and will do this is a demon, not a man; and the sovereign remedy of salvation having failed to meet his case, he will go to the fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

“Behold your king!” — Now you hear it from lips of dust, and you rejoice, brethren. You rejoice to behold him, the despised and rejected, crowned with thorns, beaten, bruised, clothed in rags of mockery, and near to an ignominious death. He is your king, the condemned at Pilate’s bar. But, as you stand at Pilate’s bar around him whom your soul loveth, look up! Do you see the blue sky over you? From thence he will come ere long, and will not tarry. Then will he wear a crown, not of thorns, but of thousand thousand suns. Then his imperial garment, not a robe of purple dust, but one inwoven with light, will blaze like an ocean of melted diamond, and seraphs will hide their faces. Then, not a reed, but the omnipotent sceptre of the universe, will grace his pierced hand. He will not stand then to be judged of ungrateful worms, but he will sit to judge the world in righteousness. No clamorous Jews, no profane heathens, will crowd his sacred person; but submissive angels without number will surround him in respectful distance, to fly to the execution of his nod. His lips will not be silent, but will speak, in the harmonious accents of heaven, eternal peace to the righteous, and shake earth and hell with the thunder of his just irrevocable sentence. The new heavens will proclaim it with joy, He is our king! the new earth will echo back the joyful sentence; and as the swelling sound rolls on and breaks at last upon the distant gates of hell, Omnipotence will extort from its reprobated inmates the confession,— “He whom we crowned with thorns, mocked, buffeted, and crucified, rules the universe with the sceptre of his

love, or the iron rod of his insufferable indignation. *Every knee shall bow unto him, and every tongue confess him Lord.*

Take it with you, brethren and sisters, the dear word,—  
“Behold your King!” Behold him by faith, while you sojourn here below, and soon, soon you shall see him as he is. The unconverted of my hearers may retire at this time with the solemn admonition of the Psalmist: Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him! Amen.

## VII.

### THE SCENE OF GOLGOTHA.

And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name : him they compelled to bear his cross. And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, they gave him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall : and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down, they watched him there : and set up over his head his accusation, written, **THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS**. Then were there two thieves crucified with him ; one on the right hand, and another on the left. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the Chief Priests, mocking him, with the Scribes and Elders, said, He saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him ; for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani ? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be ; let us see whether Elias will come to save him. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom ; and the earth did



quake, and the rocks rent ; and the graves were opened ; and many bodies of saints which slept arose and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him ; among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children. — MATTHEW 27 : 32—56. (Compare MARK 15 : 21—41 ; LUKE 23 : 26—49 ; JOHN 19 : 17—37.)

IF we were called upon to be present at the death-bed of one of our most endeared friends,—perhaps that of a tender-hearted and faithful father, or of a pious praying mother, or of a dear, well-trying partner, or of a godly brother or sister, or a beloved child,—certainly we should prepare ourselves to attend the solemn and affecting scene with the most collected and serious frame of mind. At the sufferings and the struggles of the beloved object, the most tender emotions would agitate our breast. Our bosoms would heave with his bosom, and our eye would melt with every painful motion of his countenance. We should suffer, we should agonize, we should die, as it were, with him. At the near and awful view of eternity and eternal things, the oblivion of earth and of every perishable object would, like an impenetrable curtain, draw itself around us and the couch of our departing friend, and for one hour at least — an hour of deep interest and of incalculable bearings upon our own approaching death and future state — it would wipe out the usurped importance of sublunary things ; and we should feel, perhaps for the first time, that there is but a step between us and between death, the grave, judgment and heaven, or hell, and — what throws a mountain-weight of importance into the scale of all this —

that ETERNITY which will then seal our state, and put a period to time, probation and change, forever.

But what if the dying friend of our heart had been brought upon the bed of anguish and death for *our sakes*? What if he had saved us from drowning by throwing himself after us into the deep,—had seized upon us with the determination not to let us go while life and strength remained in him,—was hastening into the grave by the consequences of over-exertion, and wished now to see us once more, and rejoicing that we are but saved, desired to bid us the last farewell? What if he had rescued us from the swords or guns of our enemies that were stronger than we, and was now dying with the deep and remediless wounds which he then received? Or if he had dashed through the flames of our dwelling to pluck us from the bed of languishing, and to carry us out into a place of safety and comfort, and we, recovered and in health, were now called upon to listen to his dying groans? What a torrent of emotion would rush upon us! Feelings of obligation and a sense of gratitude due to him, almost insufferable, would overwhelm us; sympathies, tender as the softest chord of a mother's bosom, would thrill through every nerve of our frame; and the ardent wish now *to die for him* would be but the voice of fallen nature. All this, and infinitely more, comes before us to-day, my friends. Our friend dieth,—our best friend in heaven and on earth; our brother dieth,—our beloved, our faithful brother; our Lord, the Saviour of our perishing souls, our eternal King, draws near the fatal hour. Sorrows are rushing upon him like the foaming waves of the ocean; and death in its most appalling form, death in its royal pomp of terror, death with its most chosen weapons of torture, has marched forth, stands in battle array about him, and has levelled the whole artillery of hell at his broken heart.

From heaven he came down ; he dashed in among the powers of darkness and into the jaws of death and hell, to rescue us from thence ; and he did it. But not without the mortal wound predicted by the word of prophecy. He dies : he dies for us ; he dies that we might live ; and he calls us to-day to gather around his dying bed. His dying bed ! O, that it was a bed ! Alas ! it is his dying CROSS,—a *rough block*, to which he is nailed in the most painful position ; not a soft pillow on which he rests,—it is the shameful, painful, accursed tree.

Let us draw near, then, with that solemnity of mind befitting the scene of our consideration, and we shall not draw near in vain. Sweet consolations and comforts, precious above gold and pearls, will flow from his wounded side ; and the impressions which the beauty of his sufferings and death will then make upon us will be such as heaven and eternity will only deepen and purify, but never, never efface.

We shall have time merely to pass over the account of our Lord's crucifixion, without any further subdivision ; and all that I shall endeavor to do will be to add such remarks to the passages of Scripture which will need to be quoted as will give us the fullest possible idea of the event which we are capable of receiving.

The scene of our present text was preceded by the capture of Christ, his arraignment before Pilate, and his condemnation and flagellation. The sentence of his death was no sooner pronounced, when, after a short repetition of the insults already offered to him previous to his condemnation, he was hurried to the place of execution. This was the usual practice ; and in this case it became the more necessary, since the great Feast of the Passover was close at hand.

It would be a vain endeavor to trace the way by which



Christ went out of the city, since we are utterly unable to tell where the house of Pilate stood. Nay, not even of the hill of Golgotha has there remained a trace, after the destruction of the city. For the hill now exhibited under that name is far from being the one; and the awe with which thousands approach that spot, and the idolatry which they practise there, are equally without the shadow of a foundation.

“And he, bearing his cross, went forth;”—so John. This was the custom of the time, and a part of the punishment. It is probable that a quantity of crosses were always kept on hand by Pilate, lying in his yard or standing in the judgment-hall, and that our Lord took up the one designed for him on that spot. “And there were also two other malefactors led with him to be put to death.”—Luke 23 : 32.

A cross was a block of wood, of considerable thickness, and sufficiently high to be driven at least two feet into the ground, and then still to stand out far enough to raise the individual fastened upon it about three feet above the surface of the earth. Adding to this the usual length of a man, nine or ten feet of height must be allowed to a cross. To this block, near the upper end, was fastened a cross piece of five or six feet in length (the arms and the breast of a man being equal to his height); and thus the whole of a cross would amount to a beam of timber from fifteen to sixteen feet in length.

No wonder, then, that our Lord, after the cruel treatment he had experienced since the preceding night, and especially after his horrid flagellation and the serious loss of blood occasioned by it, was unable to bear upon his lacerated shoulders so considerable a weight as his cross must have been. Tradition would make us believe that he fell three times under his burden. That he did fall once, at least, is in the highest degree probable, from the nature of the case,



even if the tradition alluded to deserves no attention. At all events, the aid which his executioners allowed him, when they compelled Simon of Cyrene, probably a believer, to bear, or to help him bear, his cross, evidently shows that he was unable to proceed unassisted with the expedition they desired; for pity, we have already seen, is not what we can reasonably expect to have led them to this measure. Rather shall we have to suppose that every severity was previously exercised by them, by way of scolding, pushing and striking, to make him perform the task unassisted, and that in allowing him help they yielded only to absolute necessity.

Notwithstanding the early hour and the approaching feast, Luke informs us "there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which latter also bewailed and lamented him." (Luke 23: 27—31.) Many of the most intimate friends of our Lord must have been present at Jerusalem on account of the Passover. Many of the pious women, too, who had ministered unto him of their substance, must have been there. Some of them, indeed, we shall meet hereafter. When the affrighted disciples dispersed, the night previous, we must, of course, suppose that, having no homes of their own at Jerusalem, they scattered abroad, and hid themselves wherever they knew a disciple of Christ; and it is not even improbable that some crossed the Mount of Olives, to bear the sad tidings to their own and their Master's beloved friends at Bethany. It is therefore not surprising that, towards the close of the iniquitous transactions at Pilate's bar, a considerable number of well-disposed and pious persons were gathered together. Their silent grief and tears would easily rouse the sympathies of many among the people, whose pliable and unstable hearts yielded to every impression of grief or joy, of seriousness or dissipation,—a class of persons which has ever

been numerous, especially among the female sex ; and thus we need not wonder that a multitude of women, who could just as well laugh and sport the next hour, now burst out in weeping and wailing and lamentations. I do not say that the pious friends of Christ and the godly women who had supported him did *not* weep. I believe they did ; and what an adamant heart must that have been which could not be melted into tender sorrow at the affecting sight ! But excess of grief is seldom the fault of the pious ; and the answer of our Lord evidently concerns those who, with their children, were to be the unhappy sharers in the overthrow of their devoted city. “ Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us ; and to the hills, Cover us ; for if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry ? ”

About the third hour of the day, according to Mark (15 : 23), that is, about nine o'clock in the morning, they arrived at the place of execution. According to the evangelist John (19 : 14, 15), Christ was not condemned until the sixth hour, and of course could not have been upon Golgotha at the third hour. There are manuscripts which exhibit in John the reading the “third hour” instead of “the sixth ;” and the author of the “Alexandrine Chronicle” declares that in the autograph of John, kept in the church of Ephesus, the reading was actually (ὃν ὥσεὶ ὥρα τρίτη), it was about the third hour. Thus John and Mark would agree. But be this as it may, it is easy to suppose that John commenced his reckoning about three o'clock in the night ; perhaps with the time when Christ was condemned

by the Sanhedrim, or some other period which was prominent in his mind. At all events, the statement of Mark is, that which commences with the rising sun. For, according to Matthew and Mark, the sun was not darkened till about the sixth hour, and not, too, until Christ had been hanging on the tree for some time, and abused by the Jews and the people, and until his garments had been parted, and various other things had transpired.

On arriving at the place of execution, they commence by offering to Christ "vinegar mingled with gall," as Matthew says; which is explained by Mark to have been "wine mingled with myrrh." This vinegar (of Matthew) or wine (according to Mark) was wine spiced with myrrh for the purpose of intoxication. "When any person," says the Talmud of Babylon, "was brought forth to be put to death, they gave him to drink some frankincense in a cup of wine, that it might stupefy him, as it is said, Give strong drink to him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that be of heavy hearts." And there is a tradition that the gentlewomen of Jerusalem afforded this of their good will. (Lightf. III. p. 164.) Christ refused this beverage, for reasons too obvious to be mentioned.

Then they proceed to the crucifixion without delay. The cross I have already described, as to its shape and size. The usual manner in which malefactors were put to the cross was the following: The cross was first driven into the ground. Into the perpendicular post, about the middle, there was driven a peg, or wooden pin, upon which the victim was to sit while he remained on the cross, lest the weight of his body should tear his hands from the nails, and he fall prostrate to the ground. Then the criminal, stripped of his dress, except something wound around about the lower part of his



body, by a ladder ascended the cross, or, if unable or unwilling to do so, was raised to it by the executioners. He was set upon the peg, his hands and feet were tied with ropes to their respective places, to prevent motion, and then nails were driven through them into the timber, the ropes taken off, and the sufferer left to die.

Lately, infidelity would make us believe that to nail the feet of malefactors to the cross was never practised; that their hands only were fastened with nails, but their feet simply with ropes. The Christian church, it is said, pretended that the feet of Christ were nailed on merely to save the credit of a certain passage in the twenty-second Psalm, which they think represents him in that predicament. To this we reply that the assertion has been made without any proof; that the early members of the Christian church had abundant opportunity to *know* the way in which men used to be crucified; and that the very history of our Lord's resurrection proves positively, as we shall see hereafter, that both the hands and the feet of Christ were nailed to the cross. While the soldiers are nailing his hands and feet to the tree, Christ offers up his intercessory prayer for them, and for all who were ignorantly engaged in his crucifixion,—a prayer whose beauty will never be sufficiently admired. Christ being fastened to the tree and left by the executioners, and while they are putting up the two thieves, one on his right, the other on his left, to mark him, according to the desire of the High Priest, as the chief criminal, there was again opportunity for abuse, of which the High Priests and other bystanders avail themselves, with a readiness and zeal which would sink them below the beasts of the field, even if their victim had been guilty of all with which they falsely charged him. Not an ungenerous, brutish, ferocious spirit they exhibit, but an infernal, satanic



one; and while the Roman soldiers fulfil one part of the twenty-second Psalm, by dividing and casting lots for Jesus' garments, *they* fulfil another part of it, by spitting out their venom in the very words of that portion of Holy Writ. Our Lord's prophecy respecting his resurrection is again distorted by them, and made an instrument of cruel mockery; his rightful claims to be the true Messiah and the King of Israel, his piety and trust in God,—nay, his innumerable benefits bestowed upon the poor, lost sheep of the house of Israel, for whom these sanctimonious hierarchs cared nothing,—all, all is converted into reproach and poison, and is hurled into his face. The innumerable evidences he had given of his divine mission are sneered at; and a boastful descent from the cross—a thing directly opposed to his heavenly spirit and his Father's will—is mockingly made the condition of their belief and submission.

There they are, crowding around the cross at a distance, at most, of two or three steps; and, as he was raised but about three feet from the ground, the encounter must have been a close one, and he must have been able to hear every whisper and hissing, and to discern every spiteful distortion of their faces. Wagging their heads, as a sign of wonder and contempt, they rail at him, saying, "Ah, thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself! If thou be the Son of God (that is, the Messiah), come down from the cross!" Thus those who passed by. But the High Priests know how to wound him deeper. They talk to one another in his hearing; and their gestures—you may imagine what they were. "He saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he

said, I am the Son of God!" (Matthew 27: 40—43.) Yea, was the reply of others, "Let Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe." (Mark 15: 32.) Like-feeling spirits easily mingle, and hence the Roman soldiers and one of the thieves heartily join in their abuses of Christ. "If thou be the King of Israel, save thyself," the band exclaims; and the reprobate malefactor, railing on him, roars out, saying, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us." (Luke 23: 39.)

It was about this time that the penitent thief received the pardon of his sins and the promise of heaven. This subject, however, forming, as it will, our next Meditation, must now be passed over in silence. After some hours of abuse, many of the Jews must have been called away by the preparations of the feast, or else they had spent their rage. Then some of the beloved of our Lord were permitted to draw near his cross. "There stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene and the disciple" (that is, John). Turning his eyes to his mother and his beloved disciple, he recommends her to the care of the pious youth. This was probably near noon, and Christ had hardly made provision for his aged mother, when darkness without and darkness within filled the cup of his sufferings. "Now from the sixth hour (noon) there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour." (Matthew, Mark and Luke.) This dreadful darkness of three hours was the preparation for a powerful earthquake, which, however, probably did not precede, but followed, the death of Christ. It was not an ordinary eclipse of the sun, for it was now the full moon. During near the whole time of darkness, Christ seems to have been silent, as also his afflicted friends, who stood near the cross weeping and mourn-

ing. The revilings both of the Jews and the Romans seem to have ceased, and an awful waiting of what was to come next seems to have suspended every exercise of their minds and stopped their mouths.

But so much the more powerful were the inward workings of the mind of Christ. A new trial, equally unexpected and terrible, draws near,—*inward desertion of God*. But a few hours before, Christ said to his disciples: “Behold the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and *shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone*, BECAUSE THE FATHER IS WITH ME.” Before the Sanhedrim, Pilate and Herod, he had exhibited all the dignity of suffering holiness; by the way, as he was bending under his heavy cross, he had yet sympathies for his perishing nation, and could declare that his condition—that of oppressed innocence—was preferable to theirs, which was that of suffering wickedness and unbelief. On being nailed to the cross, he could yet say, “Father, forgive them;” under the abuses of the Jews and the heathen, he felt yet that his judgment was with the Lord, and his work acceptable with his God; and he had yet a Paradise to hope for, and to impart to a repenting sinner; and a few minutes before the darkness spread over the land, he had calmness of mind sufficient to provide for the temporal comforts of his mother. But *now* his mind is overwhelmed with distressing doubts. He knows no more what to think of himself, of his Father in heaven, of his cause, of his own sufferings and death, of his prospects, of God’s promises, of this perishing world. In vain he struggles for light and assurance; cloud upon cloud rises, billow upon billow rushes towering over his soul, while he bears it for the space of three hours in silent horror of soul, yet in the exercise of perfect submission to the will of the



holy and offended Majesty of heaven. He is sinking into "deep mire where there is no *standing*;" he feels his soul descending "into deep waters;" the floods overflow him; he is weary of crying; his throat is dried and hoarse; his eyes are failing fast; while he is waiting — long, and, alas! in vain, it seems — for his God. His breast is full to bursting, and out of the abundance of his heart his mouth speaketh. And what do you think he spoke? "And about the ninth hour (three o'clock) Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27: 46.) He dares not say, My Father! he calls him his God,—a disconsolate exclamation. True he calls him, My God. Every believer who has experienced something like it knows what I say. God is the God of every creature; he is and ever will be the God of fallen spirits,—but, alas! their angry, their offended God. The expression "My God" marks but too well the almost distance at which Jesus felt himself to be from that *Father* in whose bosom he had been through all eternity past, in infinite delight and divine intimacy and harmony. It was the hiding of God's countenance, the utter absence of his presence; spiritual darkness and drought, accompanied as it always is by the fiery darts of the adversary hurled by torrents into the distressed soul. But what such darkness and separation from heaven must have been to him who had always enjoyed the light of God's countenance, I do not presume to conjecture.

It does not, however, seem to have been necessary for our salvation, nor proper in the judgment of the Holy One, that his equally holy child Jesus should remain long in this disconsolate condition. After three hours the darkness passes; but only to render him sensible to another, and, indeed, to the



most distressing natural inconvenience attending crucifixion, — to *thirst*. Pain is conditioned upon the existence of nerves, and our hands and feet belong to those parts of our frame in which the greatest number of nerves converge. The wounds therefore inflicted upon the hands and feet of the man who was crucified soon excited a high and scorching wound-fever. It is peculiar to the wound-fever to break down effectually the spirit of man; and there is no hero known who, on being seized by it, did not become the most trembling coward, and take to the most precipitate flight, if he could. But the thirst of those condemned to crucifixion raged with a force quite peculiar to their state. The soldiers are now sitting and wondering at what they see and hear, and suggest to each other whether he had not called the prophet Elijah, and whether Elijah would come and deliver him; for they, not understanding Hebrew, necessarily mistook the sense of our Lord's exclamation. Then "Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." (John 19 : 28.) The soldiers hearing this, one of them runs to a vessel filled with common wine, and putting a sponge upon the reed of a hyssop (which grows rather larger in Palestine than with us, and yields a feeble reed of two or three feet in length), he fills the sponge with wine, and puts it to the mouth of Christ, that he might suck it out. This wine is a different beverage from that which our Lord refused to take before his crucifixion, and contained no myrrh. "When Jesus had received the vinegar (that is, the wine), he said, It is fulfilled." (John 19 : 30.) Then crying out with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and having said thus, he bowed his head (John 19 : 31) and gave up the ghost. (Luke 23 : 46.) Then the earth was shaken, rocks in diverse places

were rent, and graves opened, and the inner vail of the temple which separated the sanctuary from the Holy of holies was torn in two pieces. The centurion and his band, affrighted, gave glory to God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous man; truly this was the Son of God: and many of the people, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned." (Luke 23: 48.)

"The Jews, therefore, because it was the preparation that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day (for that Sabbath day was an high-day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record and his record is true, and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done that the scripture should be fulfilled, a bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they have pierced." (John 19: 31—37.)

Thus died he who brought salvation to this perishing world. He came poor, and poor he went out of this world; with wounds and stripes, and with a wreath of thorns around his head. Extended on the cross he finished his course; but he left behind him the rich legacy of a boundless and eternal salvation to all who repent and believe. The reality of his death has been doubted by some; but by such men, and upon such grounds, that we need not feel any concern on the subject. It rests with us on the sure foundation of the divine Word; it was predicted by the prophets of old, and by Christ

himself; it was witnessed and attested by impartial and quite incredulous witnesses; it is either asserted or assumed in every book, and almost on every page, of the New Testament; it was firmly maintained by the primitive Christians in the face of Jews and heathen; it was silently though unwillingly acknowledged by the bitterest enemies of the truth. In addition to all this, however, when we shall come to the history of our Lord's resurrection, I shall bring forward such evidence as will show the inherent absurdity of every contrary hypothesis.

Various and delightful are the reflections and comforts which cluster around the cross of our Lord and Saviour. I will briefly indicate a few, and then close.

1. Many and great are our comforts on the bed of languor and death.

How enviable is our situation at the very time when stretched on a dying bed, if we compare it but for a moment with the situation of Christ! Usually there is with us the comfortable room, there is the convenient bed, the soft pillow, the soothing medicine, the refreshing drink. There is the careful wife, the anxious husband, the affectionate child, the experienced mother, the faithful friend, the able physician, around our bed, taxing every power of invention to alleviate our sorrows; — as though the tears they hide, the sighs they suppress, as though the deep thrill of tenderest sympathy which animates every whisper of their voice, were not already more precious, more stored with soothing power, than all the spices of India and the productions of European science; and often, while a stranger and far from friends and kindred, a merciful Samaritan is led by, and pours oil and wine into our wounds. If we choose to have it so, there is also the word of God, the voice of prayer, the consolations of the Gospel,



ministering spirits encircling our bed; the love of Jesus, the hope of heaven through his blood. By a merciful dispensation, the distracted world then flees, our enemies are out of sight, the whole world seems to consist of a few loving friends, because no others approach our couch. True, here you see a Swartz, after near fifty years of faithful and hard missionary labor, dying with excruciating pain; there a Christian like Thomas Scott struggles for a hope of heaven until his thickening blood already gathers around his heart, and circulation begins to stop; in yonder hovel you find stretched out in a corner on the ground, alone, unheeded, a Martyn, dying the death of the righteous. Often, indeed, it is true, what the prophet Isaiah testifieth (57: 1, 2), "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, and no man considereth;" — but what follows does also hold true: "The righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace, and all who have walked in uprightness rest in their beds." Either *external* or *internal* comforts, but usually both, are administered to the suffering and dying believer. Jesus' faithfulness and love will not let him expire in utter darkness and destitution; and never have I heard of that Christian who exclaimed like unto him, "My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" He may be tried hard; destitution without and within may oppress and afflict him; but a secret and faithful hand will bear him up, and bear him through, and before his soul leaves her tenement of clay he will return answer to himself, saying, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? *Hope thou in God*: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God."

But what shall I say, fellow-Christians, of our fretfulness,



our impatience on the bed of languor, our unmindfulness of our many comforts even then, and of the many services of love we are receiving, and of all of which our Lord was destitute? Ah, we had lost sight of Calvary then; and well may we hide our blushing countenances in the dust, as we look up to Him. Break it down, that wicked and unbroken spirit of self-will and fretfulness; break it down by the cross of Christ! It will not do for us to harbor that evil demon in our breasts, after we have seen how Jesus suffered and died. O, may death find us in the exercise of meek submission, and with the sweet petition on our tongues, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!"

2. Jesus can perfectly sympathize with us to our last expiring breath.

I have but little to say on this reflection. To *reason*, it seems that God must know our afflictions, and be able to sympathize with us, without having himself the experience of them; and even to him who admits it on the authority of revelation, that we did need such an High Priest, the idea has but little if any savor. Here distress and trouble, the sick bed, the dying bed, must be the interpreters and the preachers of the Word; and I can only say, Remember this truth when you are drawing near unto death, and see whether it will not yield you comforts, whether it will hold out or not when all human consolations fail.

3. Sorrows and spiritual darkness, which sometimes attend the dying bed of a Christian, are no evidence either against the truth itself, or against his own Christian character; and the easy death of the infidel proves neither the truth of infidelity nor the goodness of his heart.

The impenitent criminal on the cross experienced no hidings of God's countenance, and not a word of concern or anxiety

about the past or the future escapes his lips. Not even the dreadful torment of the cross could humble him sufficiently to make him refrain from sin and blasphemy, and probably he has never since stopped cursing and blaspheming. But the holy Saviour is full of distress, and anguish, and mourning. It is, indeed, the legitimate effect of "a good hope through grace" to sustain the sinking spirits when heart and flesh fail; and it is no more than natural that the absorbing interest of earthly things should vanish, and leave the soul empty and the bosom desolate when the honest hour of death draws near, and eternity pours its peering light upon the titles, treasures and lusts, of this perishing world. Moreover, we know that God is with his people in life and death, but that the hope of the hypocrite and the worldly man will perish when God taketh away the soul. Yet who can doubt that deep-rooted self-righteousness, brute stupidity, or strong and refined stoicism, may not cleave to the dying sinner until the light of eternity reveal to him his character, and the flames of hell his doom; while the trembling believer, on closing his weeping eyes upon this world, may hear the unexpected invitation, Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord! Let us not boast too much of the joyful death of many a pious soul, but rather be humbly grateful for it. It is a gift of God, which he may bestow or withhold. Let us rather see to it, all ye who hear me, that we breathe the spirit of Jesus now, and the abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our God will not fail us, whether our death be trying or triumphant.

4. We ought spiritually to die to the world and all its vanities.

Paul professes to be by the cross of Christ crucified to the world,—that is, as dead to its allurements as a crucified man

would be; and the world to be crucified unto him,—that is, utterly incapable of charming him any longer. (Galatians 6: 14.) — “They that are Christ’s have crucified their flesh with the (sinful) affections and lusts,” chapter 5: 24,—that is, they have broken down, by the power of God, their ruling influence over them. “I am crucified with Christ!” he exclaims in another place; “nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;” chapter 2: 20. Similar sentiments are scattered over the pages of the Bible everywhere. The death of Christ does not excuse us from dying to our lusts, but it renders this possible; it shows its propriety; it implies it, it recommends it; nay, it absolutely commands it, and with a voice, too, more powerful than the combined thunders of Sinai. To sin under the old dispensation was to transgress the law; to sin under the new, is to transgress the law, and to crucify the Son of God. He died *for* sin; we must *die to* sin. And, blessed be God! now we can do it. The enemy is conquered; the new and living way is open; the vail of the Holy of holies is torn asunder; our graves are open; Christ and his merits and his omnipotent Spirit are ours.

5. Once more. — There is no rest, no peace of heart, except under the cross, and in the cross.

There is no rest except *under* the cross. There is no satisfaction, no peace of mind, to be expected, except *there*. I know, on hearing this, the worldling will point me to his diversion and pleasure, in which he delights to wallow; the ambitious, to his acquired or desired greatness, fame, titles, etc.; the avaricious, to his yellow dust; the scholar, to his rich and boundless field of literature and science. But, I repeat it, there is no rest, no peace, no satisfaction, except under the cross of Christ. For there is in the human breast a set of

slumbering wants, which stretch themselves infinitely beyond all the boasted glories of this world, and leave stars, comets and galaxies, at an interminable distance beneath their feet. There are eyes planted in the heart which must be filled with the glories of a spiritual world, a world of holiness, or they will forever grate upon their sockets, and rouse insufferable anguish. There is a thirst, a hunger, lingering unheeded in the deep recesses of the spirit, which is not to be hushed forever into silence by the highway din of carnal desires and worldly dissipation, or drudgery, and which must be satisfied with the bread and water of life, or eternal starvation will inevitably follow.

There is no rest only *in* the cross; in the giving up of every wrong, self-seeking desire, of every idol and darling sin within and without us. To be nothing in this world, to wish for nothing but Christ, to know nothing but Christ, to have nothing but him, is perfect freedom, perfect health, eternal wealth, supreme wisdom, irresistible and holy power, transcending and real dignity, the satisfaction of every want, the filling up of the deep and vacant pit of all our spiritual desires, and endless rest.



## VIII.

### THE PENITENT THIEF ON THE CROSS.

And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise. — LUKE 23 : 39—43.

PERMIT me, my hearers, to lead you once more back to Calvary, to speak more particularly of one of the events which transpired there,—I mean the salvation of the penitent thief on the cross,—it concerns us so eminently in our present probationary state. Besides, the fact that Jesus, while hanging on the accursed tree, disposed, in the exercise of sovereign power, of the eternal kingdom in glory,—that fact is so great, so unique, that it seems to *require* our particular attention. To give sufficient relief to the different parts of the picture, I shall be obliged to speak more at large than I should otherwise have done of this poor but pardoned sinner. I shall thus take into consideration,

I. HIS WICKED LIFE.

II. HIS REPENTANCE.

III. HIS FAITH.

## IV. HIS READY ACCEPTANCE WITH CHRIST.

I. HIS WICKED LIFE. —“The way of the wicked is as darkness,” saith Solomon,—dark in its beginning, darker in its progress, darkest in its catastrophe. Where the usual restraints are taken away, the way of the wicked man begins with the degrading service of those senses which he has in common with the brutes; then he goes on to a conscious violation of known and acknowledged obligations and moral precepts; then to a dull insensibility to them; then to an instinctive disinclination to them; then to a *deliberate hatred* against *Him* who gave those precepts; then to open enmity towards those who obey them, and, in fine, towards everything holy, just and good. The character itself is ever the same; but the degrees of development differ, gathering blackness as they approach the spirit of hell to which they are verging.

Thus the prodigal son of our text. He had wasted a life in the service of Satan. We meet him on his way to death, a disturber of public peace, a terror to the innocent, an abomination to the upright, at a heaven-wide distance from God and holiness, a despiser both of divine and of human laws, unworthy to live even in a world like this, where a thousand acts of wickedness may be perpetrated unpunished. And yet his language bears a close analogy to the language of the sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament, and the best commentators agree that he was a Jew. Hence, it is probable, in the highest degree, that he enjoyed early religious advantages. Faint recollections of divine truth seem to play around his memory; stifled feelings and half-effaced impressions of past times seem to be struggling now for that influence over his mind and heart which they had so long and so unjustly been denied. How often may they have pleaded for

that share of attention which they deserved, but in vain ! Every good thought of that man had been crushed, from his youth up ; every religious privilege despised ; every offer of mercy from within and from without neglected ; God and his word set aside, his Sabbaths profaned, his people and his sanctuary carefully shunned, and bad company, profaneness, riot and gambling, preferred. Had the poor wandering youth pious parents ? They are perhaps grieved to death. The tears and entreaties of his godly mother provoked but his impatience ; the remonstrances of his father, his indignation ; the rebukes, yea, the very presence of pious people, his hatred ; public laws, his revenge ; the laws of God, his blasphemies. He began, like all the rest of forlorn wretches, with sins of the heart ; then came unrestrained language ; then the so-called small deviations of youth ; until, driven from society, he plunged himself into that whirlpool of crimes where man becomes the proper bond-slave of Satan, and a curse and terror to his fellow-men.

This, indeed, is substantially the history of thousands of every sex, age, rank and description, whose dying beds the minister of Christ has to attend. In the silent hour of midnight, perhaps, he is called. With hasty steps he proceeds to the solemn place marked by the solitary night-lamp, where an immortal being is about to change worlds. And what is the scene he meets ? There lies a poor, distressed sinner, ready to breathe his last. His physicians have given him up ; his gay friends have taken their leave, and shun his sick bed like death, a few hirelings excepted, who hope to be his heirs ; the card-table, the drinking-table, are upset ; the candles of the ball-room are quenched, and the viol, the timbrel, and the harp of his riotous feasts, are silent forever ; the busy world has forgotten him ; life has lost its deceitful charms, its

usurped importance ; eternity draws near. His early lot God had caused to fall in pleasant places, intending to give him a goodly heritage in his kingdom hereafter. Pious parents, good society, the privileges of the sanctuary, the word of God, many a faithful admonition of conscience, in short, a thousand calls from heaven, marked his youthful days. But the world called on the other side, and promised, what it is neither able nor willing to give, happiness, greatness, satisfaction. The sensual youth doubted, listened, endeavored the impossible and absurd task of serving two masters. He *cannot* bear to give up the world all at once, as the Bible requires it ; he wants to enjoy himself a little while ; he is caught. His thoughtfulness, if any he had, wears out ; his strength to resist the evil one fails ; nay, he begins to like his baits ; doubts respecting the reality of religion fill his mind ; the darkness of the sacred Scriptures, the imperfection of pious people, the pressure of business, and ten thousand other lying refuges, are resorted to ; the world gathers numberless and resistless charms ; the tempter doubles his offers, and the deluded sinner strikes hands, and, bidding deliberately farewell to Christ and his cross, he follows on straightway as an ox goeth to the slaughter ; he serves the flesh, the world, and the devil. Awhile he feels himself great and happy ; his course, especially when compared with that of the humble and despised Jesus and his followers, seems to be an honorable, interesting and delightful one ; until God lays his hand upon him,—until sickness, death, the grave, eternity, judgment and endless retribution, stare into his face. But then, O then ! — his greatness, his riches, his learning, his pleasures, his dissipations, his idle schemes and plans for many days to come,—all are vanished like a morning dream, like smoke. Now he wants to repent. He sends for ministers, he looks for



his Bible, he wants to hear the voice of prayer. He wants to be saved. But it is vain; too late — too late! The spark of a better conscience is effectually and forever quenched; the irrevocable sentence of reprobation is passed in the court of heaven, and sealed with the seal of eternity; like Esau, he seeks repentance and finds none. Despair strangles him on his pillow, and malicious spirits from beneath goad his mad and raving soul down to hell, where the worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched. A few moments he was glittering with delusive brightness on the firmament of polished society; now he goes down like a wandering star to the blackness of darkness forever, and no minister, no Bible, no prayer, no sacrament, can save him from eternal ruin!

This is the lot of thousands, and tens of thousands; but, thanks be to God for his sovereign power and grace in Jesus Christ, it is not the lot of all! Saul sins, and dies without repentance; David sins, too, but sues for pardon and receives it. Ahab serves Baalim, and dies without repentance; Manasseh serves them too, but repents and is forgiven. Among soldiers, we meet with the centurion and with Cornelius; among publicans, with Matthew and Zaccheus; among the Pharisees, with Nicodemus; among magistrates, with Joseph of Arimathea; among dissolute women, with the woman "which was a sinner," but unto whom much was forgiven because she loved much; among those who deny the Lord that bought them, we meet with Peter; among the persecutors of the people of God, with Paul; among thieves and murderers, with the penitent thief on the cross. O for eyes to behold the innumerable host of poor but forgiven sinners around Mount Zion above! Numbers without number uttering joy, gratitude and everlasting praise! But could we see them, and hear their holy song, the eye of *our* penitent sin-

ner would burn with no inferior flame, and his voice would not be found the lightest in the harmony of heaven.

II. HIS REPENTANCE.—What his state of mind was while he was imprisoned and on his way to the place of execution, we are not told. But while it is quite probable that he was not altogether thoughtless, it is certain, too, that he had no adequate conception of his guilt and danger. Had he known himself, his eyes would have been opened to see and to know his Saviour also walking near him, bearing the sins of the world; and he would not have deferred securing his own salvation to near the last minute of his life. But the poor man was ignorant of his own condition, and how could he know Him who reveals himself only to the broken and contrite in heart? So blinded are we by nature, that the most heinous crimes committed by us cannot truly impress us with our state of guilt and condemnation before God. And this is the chief reason why Christ remains unknown to most, even of those in whose ears his name is ringing every day. Let us pray for a knowledge of ourselves, and the knowledge of Christ will follow soon and certainly enough.

Our melancholy procession has arrived at the place of execution,—the crosses are raised and fixed in the ground,—the victims are fastened to them—Christ in the middle, as the chief criminal. Now a horrible scene begins, at which heaven wept, and the powers of darkness shouted for joy. The Pharisees, the High Priests, and the people, begin to mock and curse Christ, the poor, defenceless victim of their rage. They challenge him to come down from the cross, and laugh him to scorn that he had saved so many others, and was unable (as they thought) to save himself. The two murderers remained unabused, you observe; for the world loveth her own, in a measure, even to the end. Christ makes no reply,

shows no resentment; no feeling moves his breast, except that of pity; no words came from his lips, except those of prayer and intercession for his infuriated murderers. This may have been the first moment when a saving ray of heavenly light fell into the heart of our penitent thief. For thus it happened afterwards, when Christians were suffering and dying on the stake without a murmur and without resentment,—nay, with prayer for their tyrants and with praises to God,—that the eyes of thoughtless and stupid beholders were opened, their minds enlightened, their hearts renewed, and their souls saved.

The other thief, hardened in sin and given over, now begins to rave. He has inferred, from the mockeries of the Jews, that the man of the middle cross must be that famous Rabbi who had done so many great and wonderful works, and whom many believed to be the Messiah; and he doubtless expected that, if this was the case, he would forthwith show his power, descend from his cross, deliver his fellow-sufferers also, and make havoc of his enemies. But he waits in vain. Christ makes no reply, no effort to descend, but evidently prepares for death. Disappointment, contempt and anger, now take the place of a carnal hope, and fill the heart of the miserable man, and he pours out the whole torrent of his rage upon the suffering and praying and dying Jesus. Thus Herod and Pilate make friendship, and High Priests and murderers join harmoniously, as soon as Christ or his people are to be persecuted and slain. He that is not *for* Christ is *against* him, and he who does not *gather* with him *scattereth*.

Christ is silent still, and hides not his face from reproach and cursing. The penitent thief, on the other side, looks on, and wonders, and admires the scene. The moment of mercy has come; the blasphemies of his fellow-criminal and of the Jews make him shudder; God opens his eyes; he sees the



guilt of these men and his own guilt in all its length and breadth. Our guilt and our need are one. He who feels his guilt feels his need; and he who feels his need will naturally seek relief; and he that seeketh, says Christ, findeth. The heart of the poor man breaks; he can bear the sight no longer. He rebukes his companion in sin; and before God and all the world he confesses his own guilt and shame. "Dost thou not fear God, seeing that thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for *we* receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss."

To justify God and to condemn ourselves, these are inseparable and true characteristics of genuine repentance. Self-condemnation,—not the external, hypocritical, partial one, committed to memory, perhaps, from the prayer-book, but heart-felt, sincere, sweeping, carrying away from us every appearance of worthiness and claim before God,—is a dagger to the heart of the "old man." For, when our claims upon divine favor are all clean gone, then it is plain there remains no other alternative to us than to lay down our arms, and to surrender unconditionally to the sovereign pleasure of God. But to trust himself to his God without reserve, and without selfish bargains, is not in the heart of man. Hence the awful shrinking of sinners, when convinced of their guilt. Free and sovereign grace is an element in which sinful nature and the carnal heart of man must expire without remedy. And, therefore, even thieves and murderers in prison and on the scaffold will cleave to the goodness of their own characters with stubborn tenacity, unaccountable and ridiculous as the fact may appear to us. But what shall they do? Such unconditional surrender to God — ah! it is like the giving up of the ghost. To subscribe to the unqualified accusation



of unmingled and sweeping guilt, to strike ourselves the death-blow to our own characters before God, to knock away all the rotten props around about which supported us, and, relinquishing the frail bottom of chaff and sand on which our house stood, to leap out of our element, and to throw ourselves into the mysterious deep of divine sovereignty and divine mercy, with nothing in our hands but a poor, short word of promise,—O! our very soul shudders at the thought, and “chooses strangling rather than life” on these terms; and hell itself has no more terrors to human nature than this tremendous attempt. And from this point, indeed, it is that the greatest number of thoughtful and inquiring men turn back and perish forever. And yet it is and forever remains the indispensable condition of pardoned sin and eternal life.

III. HIS FAITH. — The mind of this man is no sooner settled on the subject of “repentance toward God,” than “faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” rises into existence. This is the proper divine order, which men may not invert or destroy. “Repent and believe!” is the message of God to fallen man. Some mean to believe without repentance; but they will find themselves mistaken. Faith without previous repentance is a dead thought, a mere notion, a doctrine admitted either with or without evidence,—a weak, second-handed conviction. Reasoning, at the best, built it up; reasoning may pluck it down again. It leaves the mind unenlightened, the heart untouched, unpurified, the life unaltered, the soul under condemnation of death. Faith after true repentance is a conviction resting on experience and intuitive evidence; a truth of the first order; it is the substance of things hoped for and the unshaken evidence of things unseen by carnal eyes. It carries reason and logic headlong; it quickens and renews the

heart, enlightens the mind, influences the life, overcomes the world, and lays hold on things heavenly and eternal.

So was the faith of our penitent sinner: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Lord? — What does he mean? The poor, condemned, executed Jew, a lord? Certainly he is none of the lords of *this* world, this is plain; and he never had been one of their number. He was of humble origin, and from the most despised city of Judea. "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom!" — Into what kingdom? Certainly into no kingdom of this world. For, if really birth had given him a claim upon all the thrones on earth, the hope of inheriting them, and of distributing their offices to his favorites, was forever past. "Lord, remember *me*!" — Whom? Him he was to remember, who was ready himself to expire, and who could derive no benefit from any earthly protection. No. To our penitent malefactor the world, with its prospects, was blasted, and its attractions dead forever. The eye of his faith was directed to another world; his affections were settling on things above. He calls Christ "Lord" in a spiritual sense; a Lord in the world to come, who had a spiritual and everlasting kingdom to expect, and to distribute, and whose mere remembrance of him would be sufficient to secure his eternal interests. But who is Lord and King in heaven, save the Lord of lords and the King of kings? Who has power to distribute the blessings of the world to come to whomsoever he pleases, but he "who doeth his pleasure in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and to whom no man may say, What doest thou?" This confession, therefore, amounts to the solemn and comprehensive declaration, — Thou art the Son of God, the Messiah, the Word, which was in the beginning with God and which was God, the maker

and ruler of the universe, the sovereign disposer of the inheritance of the saints in light, the Saviour of the world, who can and will save freely and to the uttermost all who come unto him.

But how does he come by this faith in circumstances so unspeakably unfavorable, so decidedly opposed to it? The condemned, expiring man, on yonder cross, the Lord of heaven? A stumbling-block of mountain size to the Jews, and the very height of foolishness to the Greeks! His was a giant stretch of faith, I confess. In respect to external support, it outstrips the faith of all the apostles, the centurion, the distressed fathers and mothers, the blind, the deaf, the lepers, the paralytics; the faith of all martyrs on the stake, in the flames, in persecution, in caves and dens of the earth. It was pure faith, clean and free from every support from without, a work of the Holy Spirit unalloyed by any earthly ingredient. Peter walked on the sea,—but he saw Christ pacing with firm steps over the rolling wave. The apostles remained faithful to their conviction,—but they had witnessed ten thousand exhibitions of Christ's divine power, and had seen him and conversed with him for three years. The sick and the distressed came to him from far,—but the land was full of his fame. The saints in after times sacrificed their lives for him,—but they had accumulating proofs of his all-outruling sceptre, daily adding strength (if this be possible) to the testimony of the sacred records. And what is it for us *now* to believe on him, when the cloud of witnesses and the mass of evidence in his favor have already become so boundless that it requires almost a life to pass over and duly estimate the whole of it? It is all comparatively nothing. Our faith is sight; and woe unto that man who can at the present day live and die without being a Christian from his heart! Sodom and Gomorrah,



Bethsaida, Chorazin, and Capernaum, the scoffing Jews, the dying *impenitent* rebel of our text, will condemn him in the judgment day.

But let us look up to Calvary again. Here is a faith firm and clear; not like the faith of many a professor of religion, an *ignis fatuus*, sprung from mud, and tossed straying until it is quenched in endless night, but bright and sure, like the polar star. Not like the dim, unsteady night-lamp, in the dismal cave of human speculation, but like the noon-day sun in his strength, rejoicing, like a strong man, to run a race, equally unchecked in his progress by the small pebble on the sea-shore, and by the heaven-towering mountains of the world, triumphing over obstacles from every quarter, and cleaving to the Divine Saviour of the world when believers doubted and despaired, and apostles fled in confusion; when angels in heaven stopped their harps in awful suspense as to what was coming, and the powers of darkness shouted victory and triumph.

“Lord, remember me!” It was a faith working *an entire and unconditional surrender to Christ*. There is no choosing, no self-will, no undue aspiration, no desire to obtain even a pledge. Remember me; this is enough. Do as thou wilt with me, only remember me. “Lord, remember me, when thou comest in thy kingdom.” This is no carnal faith, no selfish prayer. The impenitent thief on the other side wished to be remembered too; but in this world, and to be delivered from the agonies of the cross. This man is willing to suffer here, if he can live in the remembrance of Christ in heaven. This is the true distinction between the believer and the unbeliever, and their prayers: the one wishes to be delivered from pain, the other from sin; the one seeks the world, the other heaven.



But you ask again, How did he attain to this precious faith? I answer, the Holy Spirit wrought it in him. On natural principles it cannot be accounted for; but you, who know the Lord, why do you ask this question? You know that there is such a thing as divine illumination. Do you not remember the time when a light seemed to be poured all at once over the word of God,—a light which seemed to quicken every letter, and light up ten thousand stars on every page?—when divine subjects, which used to be dark and confounded in your minds, appeared to you in a harmony never before seen, and with the charms of divine symmetry chained your astonished and enchanted hearts and looks?—when a passage of the divine word, which aforesaid seemed hardly to furnish matter for five minutes' reflection, expanded in every direction, like the blue sky, till you could pursue it no longer?—when a promise, seemingly of little meaning and little value, became to you an inexhaustible source of consolation, a sure support in distress, a shield against the fiery darts of the adversary, and a flaming sword with which you could chase a thousand evil spirits from your heart? Surely ye do remember the time.

Well, here is the same effect produced by the same cause. Our dying penitent had heard of the woman's seed who should bruise the serpent's head, yet so as to have his heel bruised first; or he remembered the 22d or the 69th Psalm, or the 53d chapter of Isaiah, or some other similar portion of Holy Writ. It had been sleeping in his mind, having no sense, no interest, no form nor comeliness. But, behold, his eyes are now opened by the Holy Spirit! Heavenly light glows and blazes behind the dark transparency; all is plain, all beautiful, interesting, lovely, irresistibly attractive. The godly, patient sufferer on yonder accursed tree is the brazen

serpent raised by Moses, that all who behold it might be saved. The whole dark, unintelligible dispensation of baptisms and divers washings, of sacrifices and shedding of blood which could not take away sin — O, what a striking symbol of the sacrifice of the Son of God! Moses' mediation and prophetic character, Melchisedek's and Aaron's priestly offices, David's and Solomon's reigns,—how fit to shadow forth the new dispensation which was just commencing! “Cursed is every one,” says the law, “that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them;” and again it says, “cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, the Saviour of all men, the Lord of heaven. “Lord, remember me!” Blessed consequences of early religious instruction! Unhappy those who are deprived of them by the cunning craftiness or the infidelity of wicked men; thrice unhappy those who neglect them wilfully, and thus shut themselves out from their last ray of hope!

IV. HIS READY ACCEPTANCE OF CHRIST.—The short petition is no sooner uttered, when the answer is ready. “Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Ten thousand talents was the sinner of our text owing to his Lord, and he forgave him freely. He was a murderer,—nay, *his* murderer, as indeed we all are,—but his guilt is not so much as noticed with a word. He comes with his mountain-load of crimes, and he is received without rebuke, without a reproving look, without a moment's hesitation, and he receives his title to heaven without money and without price. He comes without long preparations of self-mortification, without that self-righteous routine invented by men; he comes as he is, poor, blind, naked, in want of all

things, and is received with open arms; he comes in the last hour of his life, and finds the heart of Christ and the gates of heaven wide open. There is one condition, and but one — “Come!”

But is not this a dangerous doctrine? Will not men on that account persevere in sin? What if they did? I am bound to preach the Gospel as it is; but I am not responsible for the abuse which wicked men may make of it. Yet, if there be here one who means to go to Calvary in order to get confirmed in sin, be it so! Let him go there, and mark well every feature of the affecting scene on that sacred spot. And, if the dying Saviour cannot impress him with the holiness of God, the sacredness of his law, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin,—if he can trample upon dying love with true infernal contempt,—if the narrow, hair-breadth escape of the repenting criminal cannot make him shudder, nor frighten him from his evil way,—then let him turn his eyes to the other side, and on the third cross he will see a man of fearful likeness to himself,—a standing, warning monument for impious, daring sinners like him,—a dying impenitent monster, mocking his Saviour, and cursing his God and his King with his last breath! That is the cross which God caused to be erected for him who dares abuse the death of Christ; on that let him look, until his flinty heart is melted with godly fear, and his very soul filled with awe; then he will be prepared to profit by the example of penitence and faith which we have contemplated to-day, and to follow it; to embrace the cross of Christ with tears of sorrow and love, and to exclaim, believing, “Lord, remember me!”

Now for a glance at that precious scene when Christ entered into the gates of life with the first fruit of his suf-

ferings, and to witness the welcome they received. But this must be reserved for another world. If we, too, repent and believe, we shall soon see this, and all the other glories of heaven, as we are seen, and know them as we are known !



## IX.

### THE BURIAL OF CHRIST.

When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple ; he went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock ; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. And there was Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre. — MATTHEW 27 : 57—61. (Compare MARK 15 : 42—47. LUKE 23 : 50—56. JOHN 19 : 38—42.)

I. "AND it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the vail of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and having said thus, he gave up the ghost." (Luke 23 : 44—46.) About three o'clock in the afternoon,—a significant, mysterious hour,—the daily evening sacrifice used to be offered up before the tabernacle of Jehovah in the wilderness ; about three o'clock the Paschal lamb used to be slain ; about three o'clock the great atoning sacrifice for our sins was made by the death of Jesus Christ, and the true Paschal lamb thus prepared for all who long to leave the Egyptian darkness of human reason and the Egyptian slavery of sin and of human works

for salvation, that they may go out into the light and liberty of the children of God. The great work was done. After three o'clock, the miraculous darkness which had commenced at noon passed away from the face of the earth. The soldiers hastened to return to their abode, and the Jews to finish their preparations for the Passover. Jesus was dead, the battle was fought, the victory won. Their rage was spent, though not their malice. They left the body of Christ, either to the impure hands of the soldiery; intending that it should rot unburied according to the Roman usage, or, what is more likely, they committed it to some servants, to throw it, with the bodies of the other malefactors, into a hole dug in some impure place, that the law (Deuteronomy 21 : 23) might not be broken. And here a difficult passage in Isaiah 53 receives light, and its true construction, which our English version does not exhibit. In the ninth verse of that chapter, it is said, "And he made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth." Here the most cursory reader is likely to be struck with the thought, that Christ, the subject of the verse and chapter in question, did not make his grave with the wicked, nor was he with the rich in his death. Rather contrariwise. He was in his death with the wicked, and made his grave with the rich, or, better, with a rich one. But a true and accurate translation of the passage, which is supported by the strongest arguments, even aside from the fulfilment, would run thus: "They gave (appointed or ordered) his grave with the wicked ones (plural), and with a rich one (sing.) he was in (or after) his death (or deaths); because he had done no violence, neither had been deceit in his mouth."

Thus this remarkable prediction has found its accurate ful-

filment, and the hand of Providence is clearly discernible in the whole transaction of the burial of Christ. Though he had done no wrong, and no sinful word had ever been uttered by him, his relentless enemies destroyed him, and intended to abuse even his dead body, by giving it an ignominious burial among outlaws, and perhaps even among the carcasses of brutes. But when the great object of Christ's death was attained, and the debt of the world paid, God interposed, and his beloved and innocent Son was honored with a distinguished burial, and a clean and honorable sepulchre; and a sepulchre, too, which was fitted to answer some other purposes of the highest importance, as the history of our Lord's resurrection shows.

Thus does our heavenly Father know how to preserve from undeserved shame and blame those that are his. They are the apple of his eye, and their character is as dear and sacred to him as *his* character is to *them*; he will save it at last by the right hand of his omnipotence, and those who trust in him shall never be confounded. It is both the characteristic and the privilege of the true Christian to seek the glory and the interests of God and of his kingdom, and to seek nothing else; and to leave his own character, and his own interests, however pure and sacred they may be, with him whose all-seeing eye follows him at every step, and whose unalterable character and promises are the unfailing guarantee that truth and innocence will conquer at last. O, what a mean pursuit, what a desperate undertaking, to seek one's own honor and advantage! To seek advantage and honor on an arena where we meet with competitors without number, with a few stoics, it may be, as supercilious spectators, and with every wild beast and every subtle serpent in human shape, as the arbiters of the contest! Where all are contending for all, each craving

everything, will you dream of getting it? It is like seeking food in the lion's den; the moment you seize hold of it, the monster will tear you to pieces. And what if you should get it, what will it be? The only way to find and secure our interests is to promote the interests of God and his cause; the only path to true honor is to seek the honor of God; the only way to preserve our characters unsoiled is to do and suffer the will of our Father, and to commend our cause to him.

I do not intend to say that we must always keep silence at the calumnies of the wicked. The good of our fellow-men, and the prosperity of the cause of Christ, are often identified with our characters. Whenever this is the case, we are not the only sufferers,—not, perhaps, the chief sufferers,—under the attacks of the enemies of truth and innocence; and in opposing truth to falsehood, and correcting meekly the wrong impressions which the slanderer may have made upon uninformed and unsuspecting men, we do not defend ourselves, but those who suffer with or by us, or for our sakes. Indeed, the true Christian suffers not at all when he is calumniated, despised and cast out as vile, either by the world or by mistaken and prejudiced Christians. He has no character to save before the world; he has no interests to secure on earth; and his character before God and his interests in heaven, what man on earth, what evil spirit in hell, yea, I say boldly, what angel in heaven, will ever be able to touch or injure that? Rob him, beat him, revile him, kill him,—or if you please, honor him, enrich him, praise him, worship him,—it is all one thing to him. You can make him neither poor nor rich, neither happy nor wretched; and, if he has any choice, he will, for his own safety, choose poverty rather than wealth, and neglect rather than honor; lest he should



forget his heavenly inheritance and call, and become unlike to his Lord. He knows that his Redeemer liveth, and the triumphant song, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" is his crown, his kingdom, his boast, his source of ever-flowing comfort and delight. Who will harm him? What has *he* to gain yet, who has gained heaven? What has he to fear who knows it is impossible he should lose heaven? Nothing, absolutely nothing! Ten thousand worlds of enraged devils will gnash their teeth at him in vain; for God is his portion forever. Only *then*, when others would suffer on his account, he will open his mouth while there is hope that it may do good. So did Christ defend his own character against the Jews, time and again. So did Paul speak "foolishly" to the Corinthians, lest his apostolic character should suffer, and millions in every age should lose the benefit of his inspired writings, and perish. So did Swartz defend his own innocence, lest the hand of Christian benevolence should be withdrawn from perishing Hindostan. So, a few years ago, did a good and humble Christian, in a superstitious and despotic country on this continent, expose vile slanderers by telling his plain story, lest many of his innocent friends should be crushed under the heel of an unrighteous and mighty Inquisition. Then, and only then, the Christian will speak and act seemingly for himself, and unwillingly too, to save others from harm. But where he stands alone with his interests and character as a Christian, he will suffer, and his meekness will prove an irresistible weapon, and a wall not to be scaled; his cause will triumph, and heaven shall know, and often the world, too, that he is beloved of God, and the heir of unfading glory. What will you do with a man who, commending his cause to God, defends himself no more? Will you attack

him? So you may. And so may any wild beast. In so doing you can only disgrace and injure yourself; and at last God will arise in his behalf, save and honor him, and cover you with well-deserved reproach and shame.

Thus it came to pass here, even in the mere externals of the burial of Christ. The innocent and defenceless Lamb of God, now slain by wicked hands, and cold, was to be buried with the burial of a thief, or a brute, and vile hirelings were already preparing to do their accursed work, when God appeared. For —

II. “When the evening was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph.” (Matthew.) Mark calls him “an honorable counsellor, that is, a counsellor of the Sanhedrim, who also waited for a kingdom of God; Matthew, “a disciple of Jesus;” John, “a secret disciple for fear of the Jews;” and Luke calls him “a good man and a just,” who had not consented to the counsel and deed of the Jews in the murder of Christ. He went in to Pilate, and did,—what was indeed often done by the relatives of a criminal, but was highly unpopular and perilous for him in this instance, —he begged for the body of Jesus. “Boldly” he went in, says Mark, not intending to indicate thereby the manner in which Joseph petitioned, but the peril he encountered by doing so, as if we should say, he *ventured* in, he *dared* to ask for the body of Jesus. Mary, the mother of Jesus, and his relatives, had a *natural* right to claim his dead body; John was a favorite and a relative to the High Priest; many wealthy and influential individuals of either sex, who were favorable to our Lord, were in Jerusalem at this time; the fact of his having been crucified was now known throughout the whole city, and the burial—they knew what it would be. But so great was the terror struck into all the

friends of Christ, such was the danger of the undertaking to rescue even his dead body, and so small the prospect of success, that none of them all seemed to rise to the conception of approaching Pilate with a request to this effect. Joseph ventured in. And what pious heart, that saw him draw near to the governor's palace, knock at the massy gate, and enter in, would not have wished him God speed, and sent up to heaven the ardent petition that God might give him "mouth and utterance," and crown him with success! And with success he was crowned. "Pilate commanded the body to be delivered," and Joseph proceeded with hasty steps to Calvary, to attend to the melancholy duty before the sun should set.

Joseph is an example of piety at court, and of friendship and faithfulness in distress. *A councillor of the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem at the time of Christ*,—what situation could there be more unfavorable to godliness than his? His lot had fallen into evil days. The powerful influence of a corrupt generation, and a selfish and reprobated clan of priests, was naturally carrying him down to ruin. What dangers were clustering around piety with him! He was rich. He was honorable, or respected. He held an office. He had much of this world's good things to lose; and what more effectual way to injury and loss could he pursue than that of professing an attachment to the hated Jesus, who now hung lifeless on the accursed tree? He take down from the cross the Nazarene, and bury him in his own grave! How could he ever take his seat again in the stately Sanhedrim? How lift up his blushing countenance before the High Priest and his father-in-law? What could he answer to the pointed and malicious remarks which would meet him in every circle of the great and the rich at Jerusalem? How must his family



have been ashamed of the degrading act ! The very boys in the streets would hardly fail to point at him as he passed, and to whisper in his hearing, " Nazarene, Galilean ! " At the court of Herod, too, his influence was now gone ; and what idea could the Roman governor henceforth have of a man who, with all his advantages and opportunities for intellectual improvement, turned out to be the most devoted of all the deluded, simple devotees of the fanciful and eccentric young Rabbi of Nazareth, who had just been crucified ? These and a hundred other considerations, however, did not shake the mind of Joseph. He had independence enough to be what he was. But he had none of the bravery which is so high in the market among the young, the bright, the rich, the literary, of our refined and civilized age,—the bravery to oppose God and despise Christ. Yet had he a kind of courage which they, in their turn, have not : that of braving the great world, of encountering the loss of wealth and honor, and of following conscience and good sense. He may have lacked the refinement and the reading of many a courtier of Herod ; but he knew what they knew not ; he knew how to think, reflect, feel, pray, choose, *act and suffer*, if necessary, for righteousness' sake. He was no mathematician, no eclectic philosopher, like Pilate ; but he was, what Pilate was not, the friend and benefactor of innocence at the gallows.

It is a vain excuse of many among the great, and one by which they pay no compliment to their own principles and character, that their situation does not permit them to be pious. Indeed ! If this be true, then be a man, and leave your iniquitous employment which keeps you from serving God. Draw out the serpent from your bosom ! Spit out the poison from your mouth ! Crush the spark of perdition that has settled in the folds of your garment ! Your situa-



tion does not permit you to be pious ! — A fine excuse ! It will answer for every thief and highway-robber, for every profane stage-actor, and every harlot about town. Their situation, too, will not permit them to serve God. But, mark it, your excuse is a vain one. You cannot serve God, because you are rich, because you have an office, because you are at court, because you are in the army. Moses was even brought up at the court of Egypt ; Obadiah was the first man at Ahab's court ; Daniel was a Babylonian prince ; David, Josiah and others, were kings ; the centurion in the Gospel and Cornelius were officers of a heathen army ; Joseph of Arimathea was a rich man and an honorable councillor. But they were all pious men, and knew how to serve God in the situation in which they were.

But I cannot dismiss this part of our Meditation without one glance, at least, into heaven, to consider with what joy and humble gratitude the heart of Joseph must have been filled, when, arriving at the court above, he saw to whom he had ministered at that gloomy and distressful day, when both the malice and the darkness of the pit seemed to be poured upon Jerusalem. Then he thought he served a holy, innocent man,—afterwards faith taught him to whom he had ministered,—but now he *saw*, and behold he was “the Word made flesh.” He was burying a suffering brother, he thought ; and, behold, he sees him now at the right hand of God, having an everlasting kingdom, and being surrounded with the worshipping hosts of heaven ! And what a source of rejoicing must it be to him now ! What in a hundred, in a thousand, in millions of years ! What throughout eternity ! Well might a holy envy kindle up in our hearts, that *we* did not live then, to bury Christ, or to do some small service towards it. All these opportunities to serve Christ while he

was on earth seem now to be so many blessed monopolies,—the privileges of a few favored ones,—and we could almost sit down and weep that we live at the melancholy distance of eighteen centuries from that bright spot in the history of our planet, when the Lord of glory paid his *incognito* visit to it, and received a few services ignorantly done to him by a few good people. But, my friends, weep not. Let not envy tempt you. There is no occasion for it. Do you want to serve Christ? You can do this now. Serve him in the temple of your mind. And, if particular external services may yield you any special comfort, behold, here are the members of his body, his children, his beloved ones; what you do to the least of them, you do to him, he has said. Behold, here is a world of perishing souls, purchased by his blood. Lead them to him, and it will be a more important and welcome service to him than if you buried him in a tomb hewn in one solid diamond.

III. We now meet with another good man. “And there came also Nicodemus, who at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes about an hundred pound weight.” (John.) What myrrh is, we all know. The aloes are not the plant of that name, from which we obtain a bitter juice, but an aromatic tree, the wood of which was used (probably reduced to powder) on occasions like ours. A hundred pounds are none too much, as many have thought; for such substances were consumed almost to any extent, according to the ability of the family. At Herod’s burial five hundred servants bearing ointments walked in the train, as Josephus relates. Part of the aloewood was probably intended to be burned in the tomb, to produce its odor.

Nicodemus must have been where he observed the whole

train of events on that day, else he could not have been present at the fleeting, hurried moment when Joseph was burying our Lord. But more. If he did not enter into a common plan with Joseph to share in that work of love, he must have watched him as he went from Calvary to the governor's house. For how could he have had his myrrh and aloes ready, otherwise? Such things were not kept in the dispensaries of families in such quantities, but needed to be purchased from the druggist. At all events, he must have been ready, as soon as Pilate's permission to bury Christ was obtained, to set out for the purchase; and while Joseph of Arimathea, John and the three women who persevered with the Lord, took him down from the cross, to carry him to his tomb, Nicodemus must have made the purchase, and met them in the garden of Joseph. They must have known, too, that he would come; for they themselves procured nothing of this kind, evidently relying on him. A lovely band of pious souls, of very different callings and habits, but united by the bond of perfectness,—that bond which is strongest in distress,—and engaged with one heart and mind in the service of their common Lord!

John 3: Nicodemus comes to Christ by night from fear of the Jews, and finds it very hard to understand the great doctrine of regeneration. Chapter 7: He is present at a furious meeting of the Sanhedrim, ventures a trembling remark against their unlawful proceedings in reference to Christ, and is so put down and silenced that we really are led to fear he will never open his mouth again. And, behold, here we meet him, all at once, among the most faithful, liberal and persevering friends of Christ.

There is not a more lovely example than this of the power of God "made perfect in weakness." Poor Nicodemus!



how full he was by nature of unbelieving fears ! All the time of our Lord's ministry he durst not come out boldly and openly. O, the High Priest, and his sacred office, and his mighty family ! O, the formidable army of the Sanhedrim ! O, the popular Pharisees and Scribes ! O, the synagogue, the excommunication ! O, the scoffing world ! and, perhaps, even my brothers, my sisters, yea, my wife, my children ! What black clouds, big with destruction,—what insurmountable barriers to open piety, to that unpopular outcast profession, which is the only one that makes men miserable in this world ! How he would have loved to hear Christ ! But, to go with those who went to mock and to dispute his heart did not permit him. And to mingle with the pious, to hear Jesus preach and teach, and to look devotional and serious, as, indeed, he was,—why, he would have sunk into the ground, if old Annas or Caiaphas had ever charged him with this high treason against the synagogue ! One dark night, late, he wraps his face into his cloak to visit that lovely, attractive young Rabbi, who seemed to turn the world upside down. Nobody was to know it ; and who can tell what white lie the poor man may have told, as he slipt down stairs or out of his house, when his unbelieving wife or children asked him where he was going so late and in such darkness without a lantern ; for you may depend upon it, he took none with him. In the young Rabbi's chamber he heard strange things of a new birth, a spiritual birth, a spiritual kingdom, and a hundred other things equally mysterious and interesting. O, how he abhorred now the childish, crazy casuistry of their corrupt traditions ! Here is religion, here is eternal life, if anywhere, he thought. Here let me build a tabernacle. But no ; he must go home. And there, alas ! he meets again his scolding wife, his distracted son, his worldly-minded daughter, his



thoughtless relatives. In the morning he is, perhaps, called to the High Priest, and received with great cordiality and brotherly affection; he hears one bad story after another about Christ; on the table lies written upon parchment, in broad characters, the awful curse upon every one who should profess Christ to be the Messiah. A resistless tide carries him down again into doubt, fear, unbelief and weakness. Once more, when he is an eye and ear witness of the iniquitous, lawless spirit of the Sanhedrim, he rises and speaks a word; but, alas! a flood of contumelies and menaces overwhelms him, and sweeps away all his courage. But, when all *his* own courage was swept away, then came that courage which is from above. When his own strength was all spent, then the power of God was made perfect in him.

Nor is this strange. The work of God in us begins where ours ceases. "When I am weak, then am I strong," says Paul; and, if there be anything paradoxical to reason, it is this saying. But in the spiritual life of the Christian it has its root struck through and through, and its most profound and important meaning. While we are strong in ourselves, there is no hope for us. But when the lamentation, "Lord, save us, or we perish!" bursts out from our distressed and melting hearts, then the day begins to dawn. Why, the very seeds must rot before they can bud. And it is a fact, God despises all human strength, and will not have it. Therefore he breaks the bones of the lion, and flings him aside into the field to rot, and then, after a little while, meat comes forth from the eater, and sweetness from the strong.

Rejoice, therefore, ye weak ones! You are the vessels of divine grace, and the instruments of God. If any mountains are to be removed, you will remove them; if any Goliath is to be slain, he shall fall by your hands. Yea, more. The

hands of the strong ones shall droop nerveless, and they themselves shall sink and perish ; but *your* weak hands shall renew their strength and hold on to the cross through life and death, till you awake in the bosom of your Saviour ! O that we had many Nicodemuses about us, weak, poor sinners ! But, alas ! men are apt to be strong like Annas and Caiaphas, they are all wise like Pilate, and great and rich like Herod ; and if Christ, the poor, pious carpenter's son, the blameless but hated sectarian, was to be buried to-day, this whole city would probably furnish precious few Josephs, Nicodemuses, and Marys. And should we be among them, my friends ?

IV. Jerusalem was surrounded with gardens. One of them, belonging to Joseph, was situated near the place where Christ was executed. The whole district of Jerusalem is rocky. The limestone of which it consists becomes harder as one descends, but is soft when situated high. In one of these rocks, belonging to Joseph's garden, he had caused his own intended sepulchre to be cut out, according to the existing custom, and a large stone slab was also prepared to guard the entrance. No corpse had ever been deposited there. Here Christ was to rest. They intended to give him a grave among the wicked ; but with a rich and honorable man was he after his death. Nicodemus was at hand with his spices. Joseph had bought some fine linen to wrap up the body with a part of the spices of Nicodemus. Perhaps the linen was made into a long gown, for the word indicates both. Around his head they wound a napkin. It must now have been late. John, and Mary the mother of Christ, are not present. They seem to have returned as soon as they knew where the corpse was to be carried. Poor Mary ! she was already advanced in years, and must have suffered much that day ! As soon as she knew the body of her beloved son was in the hands of

*friends*, who were to keep it till, after the feast, the formal burial could be attended to, she seems to have been prevailed upon to return home with John, whose mother she had become. We find, therefore, only Joseph, Nicodemus, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joses, at the sepulchre; and probably a few other female believers. Hastily they now deposited the body of Christ there, because of the Jews' preparation; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand. And they rolled the stone unto the door of the sepulchre, and departed. Here finishes the history of our Lord's burial.

Ideas can be written down, and objects can be painted, but emotions yield neither to the pen nor to the brush. Every one must experience for himself what it is to spend a solitary hour in the solemn sepulchre of Christ. Gethsemane and Calvary are awful places. The one will melt you down with fear and fluctuating hope, the other with love and gratitude and sorrow. But the scenes there are almost too much for poor human nature; the emotions which storm through your breast overmatch you; deep calls upon deep; Jehovah is passing by, in storm, earthquake and fire, and your thoughts are swallowed up before they ripen. Yet these are truly precious exercises to the dead, paralyzed soul of fallen man, and the very strokes of the electricity of heaven. But when you are awakened, terrified, warned, quickened, melted there, then, O then, come, sit down in the cool, dusky sepulchre of Jesus; shut out the world; gather in every thought; shut the door, and listen to the still small voice of Jehovah. Here, between these silent walls, time and space will vanish, and you will deceive yourself no more with ideas of great and small, and with fair promises of futurities that never come; but, as the starry, boundless firmament falls whole into your little eye at even, so shall eternity fall into your soul. Here



the storm of sins, passions, wishes, duties and idle sorrows and idle joys, will cease to roar ; a deep calm will follow, and the unexplored ocean of your mind will reflect the countenance of heaven. O, it is a good, it is an awful place ! But, if the *place* is one fit for solemn reflection, the *scene* is infinitely more so. Your sepulchre is not empty. But *one* step from you there lies a corpse, there shines a pale and lifeless countenance, that speaks worlds. Who is it ? Who ? A youth,—an innocent, a holy youth ! Ah, more than that, more than language can express. Why did he die so soon ? How did he die ? For whom ? — Down with your face upon the cold, damp stone, and answer—answer ! He was martyred to death ; his soul is gone, and where ? — To heaven, to to prepare a place for you. For me ? — Yes, for you, *sinner, poor, perishing sinner, for you !* O love divine ! thou art almighty ; thou hast conquered ; I am forever thine ! Amen, so be it ! Look into his face ; it is yet full of love. The features of other dead men, though sinners and selfish, smile, as though even *their* departing spirits wished to leave the expression of kindness upon the clay which they inhabited. Here is the countenance of love, of divine benevolence itself. Have you no emotion, no tear of pious gratitude, for him ? Impossible ! Where is the monster of a son that can stare insensibly on the pale face of his father's corpse ? Where the serpent of a daughter that can turn away with a dry eye from her lifeless mother's smile ? Where is the stout-hearted, unnatural parent, who can nail up the coffin of his offspring without a falling tear ? Here is *more* than father, *more* than mother, son, or daughter. Here is “the Word” “made flesh,” the Son of God, the Saviour, the almighty, faithful friend of your perishing soul ; here he is, murdered innocently,



that you, his murderer,—you, the murderer of your own soul and of the souls of many others,—might live.

But I have said it, emotions are not expressible by words. The feelings which the calm, devout contemplation of the “man of sorrows” kindles in the heart are sealed like the seven mysterious thunders of the apocalypse; they *must be* felt. It is but folly to Herod, the worldling, if he hears us talk of the beauties of Jesus’ bleeding head,—of that closed eye, those pale lips, those cold cheeks, the prints of those nails, and the deep wound in his side. It is grievous to Caiaphas, the self-righteous casuist and moralist, to hear of the dying love of Christ to *sinner*s. The story of the Gospel is nonsense to Pilate, the wise man of this world. Away with them, and the profane crowd that follows them in every age,—away with them from the sepulchre of Christ! But let the thinking, reflecting, the poor, the humble, come, and let their meditations be undisturbed. Heaven’s gate is open while they dwell in the silent cave. Jesus is there, and this is enough.

But, while in this changing world, they cannot always remain at the delightful spot which we have visited to-day. Duty calls them out, and they follow; but, as they go out, they take Christ with them, and often, while externally employed in secular works, their heart, their spirit, ever and anon breathes the spicy atmosphere of the sacred tomb. “All the thoughts and exercises of my mind,” says a certain devout man, “are employed in the tomb of Jesus. He is dead; I die with him. To please him, I will mortify my sinful flesh. All my desires and lusts will I take captive. I will bury them in his grave. Never shall they rule again in me. His death shall be my life. If I die with him, I shall also live with him. I will wet his grave with tears of penitence. My

heart shall be the fine clean linen into which I will wrap him. Thus will his sufferings bless my soul. I will seal up his remembrance in my heart. Love shall be the seal. When I die, I shall die in his arms. Delightful rest shall I enjoy there. His shroud shall be my ornament; his coffin my grave."

O, my friends, we must die with Christ, we must be buried with him, or we shall never rise, never live, never reign with him. To die to the world,—to die to ourselves,—O, it is a great lesson! But, if the sacred Word before us, and if all the laws of the universe and the deep and silent warnings and groanings of conscience, are not so many lies, then it is the only way yet open for us to escape the eternal terrors of the second death. Only he who dies with Christ may, like him, boldly march up to the king of terrors with the triumphant song in his mouth, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Amen.

## X.

### THE GREAT MORNING.

In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake ; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye ; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here ; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay ; and go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead ; and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee ; there shall ye see him ; lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid ; go tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. Now, when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and showed unto the Chief Priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught ; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. — MATT. 28 : 1—15.

And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week,

they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away; for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted; ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified; he is risen; he is not here; behold the place where they laid him. But go your way; tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you in Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled, and were amazed; neither said they anything to any man, for they were afraid. Now, when Jesus was risen early, the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. — MARK 16: 1—11.

Now, upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen; remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, and returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and, stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass. — LUKE 24: 1—12.

The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid



him. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together, and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he, stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin that was about his head not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre; and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre, weeping; and, as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her. — JOHN 20: 1—18.

THE history of our Lord's resurrection from the dead forms the second part of the general subject upon which our series of discourses treats. It is also the shorter part. For, although the former occupied only the space of six days, while this covers forty days, so few of the events of this period are recorded, that it seems hardly to compare with the last week of our Lord's mortal life, if you number the scenes, or regard the particularity with which the attending circumstances are stated. I call this the second part, because the *nature* of our scene has changed, almost throughout, and in many respects

from one pole to the other. Thus far the picture was full of gloom. Satan went on from victory to victory. Christ wept even at his triumphal entrance into the holy city; and what he endured amid the contentions of his disciples for preëminence, and from the anticipation of his separation from them, and what he suffered at Gethsemane, before the Sanhedrim, before Pilate, before Herod and his court, in the judgment-hall, under "the horrible whip" of the Roman soldiers, before the raging mob, and on Golgotha, we have seen successively. We have, I trust, mourned and suffered with him, and that for our good. As his last hour approached, we heard him praying in the midst of wrongs, comfort others while himself distressed; we saw him save others while he was surrounded with death; then, overwhelmed with the terrors of convulsed nature, and still more with the sins of a world, the penalties of a broken law, and the awful darkness spread over his Father's countenance, we saw him almost despair; we saw him struggle, conquer, pray again, and die for us; and the mingled and changing emotions of our breasts were as when the stormy wind rolls up clouds on the horizon, and piles and towers them up as though an eternal and heaven-high wall was to be fixed, to shut out light and life from us forever. Here and there, indeed, a ray shot through, and the storm, defeating its own purpose, unveiled now and then the pure sky, and by its own gloom set forth the loveliness of its color; yet, on the whole, the element about us was full of frown and thunder; and, had this scene lasted forever, existence would have been a burden. By and by, however, the clouds passed, the storm ceased howling, Jesus slept and rested beyond the reach of the world and of Satan. We buried him among loving friends; we saw the tear of affection shed; and the Meditations to which we attended in his solemn and silent grave,

were, I trust, sweet and profitable to us. Now, the sun is about to rise. The cock has crowed time and again. Already the light glimmers in the east. Pious women, here and there, in the slumbering city, prepare their spices and ointments to visit the sacred grave; and we are called to accompany them, to share in their work of love, their anxieties, and their joys. Angels are again winging their way down to earth, now on the most glorious errand they ever knew; and in the bowels of the earth a supernatural power moves, to strike its solid pillars, and to shake its deep-cast foundations. What! the "Father of lights" himself, the "righteous," the "holy Father," who had beheld his "holy child Jesus" throughout his great contest with infinite delight, prepares in the heaven of heavens to raise "the first-begotten of the dead" by his, the Father's, own glory,—that is, by his own glorious power,—in order thus to bear his personal witness to his love for his Eternal Son, and to the perfect satisfaction which his death had given to the inviolable law of an infinitely holy God. And Christ himself prepares to take again the life he had freely laid down for us. Thus the Father and the Son join in the glorious work. The poor, forsaken sufferer of Gethsemane and Golgotha takes again the life which he laid down, and all the prerogatives of absolute divinity. Christ prepares to rise. Rise, my soul, with him, and for one hour breathe the atmosphere of the new creation! For *thee* he died, and, immortal thanks be to him, *for thee* he rises again.

The remainder of our task, my friends, is a delightful one. Yet it is no less difficult, interesting and important, and I approach it with trembling diffidence. It is *difficult*, because the accounts of Evangelists are seemingly irreconcilable, and have been pronounced, boldly and often, to be *really* so.



And we are to reconcile them. It is an interesting task, I say, because the story is an unique one. Christ, whom we have to accompany, to see, to hear, to observe, lives and moves no more in a mortal but in an immortal body, which, not by miracle, but by nature, is exempt from the laws of matter. Now he is in heaven, now on earth ; now here, now there ; he needs no food, but he can take it without prejudice to the spirituality of his frame. We see, as it were, in a glass, yea, in reality, what we are intended to become. He is altogether the same as before in his love and kindness to his own, and his plan and his work have not changed : but he acts and speaks with absolute authority, and he returns at last to his kingdom in a divine triumph, leaving behind him a church, a preacher of eternal righteousness to every creature, together with the unfailing promises of his Spirit, and of his ultimate coming to judge the world in righteousness and to renovate heaven and earth. It is an important task, I say, because the resurrection of Christ is the seal of religion, the foundation of every Christian's hope, and the sure pledge of eternal ruin to every despiser of his love. "The task is great and arduous" (I use the words of Augustin), "but God is our help." If *he* will vouchsafe to me his assistance (and I think he has often done so during the course of these Meditations), I shall anticipate much of divine enjoyment and profit for myself and those who may hear me.

Our plan will be, or rather remain, simple through the remainder of these discourses. We shall reconcile the Evangelists in their accounts of Easter forenoon, where they seem chiefly to disagree,—and this will be our task to-day ; afterwards we shall dwell in order upon those few apparitions of our Lord, the particulars of which we read in the Gospels ; and, finally, we shall attend to the ascension of Christ, and



hear his parting command to us, and his parting promise. "And this we will do, if God permit."

To prevent all misunderstanding in our Meditation to-day, I must premise two remarks.

We shall in this instance find time only for the exhibition of a connected and continuous account of the events of the forenoon after our Lord's resurrection, without being able to show, at every step, *how this* arrangement is the preferable one, *why this* harmony of the four Evangelists is satisfactory. This my hearers may easily do themselves, if they will just take the trouble to read and compare those short portions of Scripture which I have taken for my text. But, to succeed in their examination of the consistency of what I shall state, they must keep in view that there are various ways of relating facts, of which the Evangelists make use just like other men.

I remark, therefore, first, that there are three different methods of relating: (*a*) the proper chronological method, that is, that of relating the several facts of the history of a nation, or a century, or a man, more or less selected and abridged, but each in its place and order of time; (*b*) the particular, or disconnecting method, if you permit me to call it so, that is, that which takes *one* fact out of a larger number, and gives it in its details, without connecting it before or after with the adjoining events. All anecdotes are of this kind. Of such facts John has given us a number in his Gospel, and especially in the history of our Lord's resurrection; (*c*) the *collective* method, that is, that which takes similar events and circumstances together, and gives them to us without any reference to order or time, intending merely to state facts. Thus the three first Evangelists state that *females* went out early to the sepulchre, merely because it was a fact

that some females did go out, though not at the same hour, nor together ; and they state what happened in and at the sepulchre, and on the return of the women, merely because it did thus happen, but wholly aside from the order of time. So you will find sentiments uttered by our Lord, and parables frequently arranged together upon this very same principle, without any reference to chronology. And that this method has been adopted by some of the best ancient writers is well known. In harmonizing, therefore, the accounts of different writers, you must always be careful to inquire whether they do pursue the same method, or different ones ; and if different ones, then you must, in point of time, rectify the collective relation by the chronological one, and complete and arrange it in its details by the particular account at your command. Otherwise you get yourself into unnecessary and endless trouble. This is the way in which I shall endeavor to harmonize the events of the history before us.

The *second* remark I wish to make is intended to free you at once from unnecessary anxieties, as though the reality of Christ's resurrection was now depending upon *my success*, or that of any other man, in harmonizing its accounts. I should not tremble if it were, but you perhaps would. But this is not the case. There lies so much of agreement and harmony on the very surface of the Evangelists, even in the calumniated history of the resurrection, that it would have been the verdict of truth before any civil bar of justice. You shall judge for yourselves. The great features of it are alike in all the four Evangelists.

The points of unquestionable and unquestioned agreement are as follows : 1. Christ rose from the dead on the third day after his crucifixion. 2. The event was first announced to some female believers, and not to the eleven disciples. 3.

The messengers were angels. 4. It was communicated to them on an early visit to the sepulchre. 5. The disciples also saw Christ, but not till afterwards. 6. They saw him without any apparition of angels or spirits. 7. The females found the sepulchre open. 8. What the females heard and saw, they saw and heard it partly in the sepulchre, partly near it. 9. The disciples themselves never met Christ at the sepulchre, but in different places. Thus far they positively agree. Other facts, stated perhaps by one Evangelist, and merely omitted by others, are not even seemingly contradictory to the whole of the event; and those which seem to oppugn each other will find their solution, I hope, in the exposition now to be given.

About the reality of Christ's *death* there prevailed but one profound conviction among friends and foes. The soldiers think it quite unnecessary to break his bones; Pilate receives with confidence the official report of the centurion, that the Nazarene was dead, and immediately gives permission to bury him. The Jews think it unworthy of their effort to prevent his burial, and, on requesting afterwards a guard, they merely suggest that he might be stolen, but by no means that he might revive. Joseph, Nicodemus and the women, lay the corpse, wrapped in thin linen, into a cold sepulchre filled with one hundred pounds of spices, all of which was calculated, not to revive the body of a half-dead person, as some have shamelessly asserted, but to extinguish it.

After three o'clock they took him from the cross, and between four and five they must have been through the burial; and, rolling the stone before the sepulchre, they went their way. Then the great Sabbath commenced, and the High Priest had just time enough to request a Roman guard from the governor to place it before the sepulchre, and to seal



the stone with his seal. Joseph, Nicodemus and the females, being already gone, and remaining at home all the Sabbath, according to law, did neither hear nor apprehend anything of this last measure of the Jews; for Joseph lived not in his garden, but in the city. Much less could the other disciples and friends of Christ receive any notice of it. They were scattered through the city. Some, perhaps, were gone to Bethany; the gardener of Joseph was prevented by the Sabbath from giving them any intelligence; and, in fact, the doleful story was ended, their last hope extinguished, and the last spark of curiosity or inquiry quenched.

The body, however, was not properly *buried*, but only *deposited*. It was yet to be anointed, placed in a coffin, and put into one of the niches in Joseph's sepulchre. As yet it lay upon a bier. The Sabbath ended too late in the evening to render it expedient for anybody to visit the sepulchre, and, indeed, it was not till then that the fact that Christ had been deposited in Joseph's sepulchre became known among his friends. But early the next, that is, Sunday morning, before daylight, Mary Magdalene rises up. She prepares spices and ointments. According to Matthew and Mark, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and Salome, join her in this work of love. They knew nothing of the sixteen Roman soldiers before the grave; for even Joseph could not have heard of it till Saturday evening after the sun had set. Their only anxiety, therefore, is, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" The keeper of the garden could hardly be expected to do it alone, and laborers were not as yet about the way. Yet their longing desire is too great; they proceed through the dusky, silent region, carefully avoiding the great road, to do which was easy enough,



if Josephus' account (Jewish War, B. v. ch. 2) of the gardens and vineyards about Jerusalem is correct.

While these pious females were yet on their way, when the morning began to dawn, the great hour was come. Four soldiers were watching before the sealed stone, the others reclining to and fro, but quite at hand, and slumbering, when a powerful shock, if not several, waked them up. The rock shook, and every object about them seemed to move. The first thought which must necessarily have struck these responsible men was, Is the seal of the sepulchre destroyed or injured?

Their eyes turn, as it were, instinctively, to the stone, and behold, a being, flashing like lightning, stands there, and, as with a magic touch, rolls away the mighty rock, and sits down upon it, as when a lion coucheth to expect with royal ease and disdain the vain assault of crawling insects! The moment after the stone was rolled away, the women appear at the gate of the garden, or farm. But either the angel had not yet taken his place upon the grave-stone, or, what is more probable, the eyes of the women "were holden" that they did not notice him. Confounded and afraid, the soldiers had fled into some corner of the garden, and thus the prospect from the garden-gate was one of solitude and breathless silence, as moments after a shock of earthquake are apt to be. The grave was open, and the first thought which struck Mary Magdalene was, Alas! they have taken him hence. But who? Joseph?—O no! why should he? Alas, it is but too probable that the Jews have come to carry him away, to spend upon him the remainder of their rage. At all events, something melancholy, it strikes her, has happened. Overflowing as her feelings ever were, she cannot bear her apprehension alone; and, leaving the two other women, she

hastens right back to the city, to apprize Peter and John of what she had seen, and communicate to them her fears. In the mean time the other females enter, approach the grave, and all at once they see the supernatural being sitting upon the stone. Fear takes hold of them, but the angel's kind address keeps them from sinking; "Fear not, ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here, for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay, and go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him, lo, I have told you." So the angel. They, filled with awe and joy, depart and run to bring his disciples word. From the angel's descent to this point, hardly five minutes could have elapsed. During this time, the soldiers became satisfied that there was a more than human arm here displayed, and made their escape. Their interview with the High Priests will receive a word of attention on some future opportunity. In the mean time, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, as they hasten back to the city, meet Jesus unexpectedly, and probably not far from the garden of Joseph. This interview took place after that which Christ had with Mary Magdalene (compare Mark 16: 9); and, to make this consistent, you may suppose that these two elderly women stopped at the house of some neighbor to recover from their excitement of mind, and then proceeded to the city; or, they may have run through the city over to Bethany, to some disciples there, and met Christ by the way. As soon as they see him, they sink down at his feet. But he addresses them. "Be not afraid, go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me." Knowing, probably, or at least apprehending, that Mary Magdalene had gone to Peter and John, and that these two must now needs be on one of

the ways leading to the sepulchre, and not at home, they naturally direct their steps towards the dwellings of some other disciples, or to Bethany, as I suggested; and this makes it so much the easier to see why they did not meet Peter and John. But, whatsoever road they took, it was a by-path, and to miss each other was very easy.

The three pious females whom we have now accompanied were not the only ones who intended to share in the privilege of anointing the Lord's body. Probably soon after them another company of pious women set out for the same purpose. This supposition, which clears away all the difficulties discoverable under this head in the first three Evangelists, is in itself more than probable. There were present at Jerusalem many disciples and friends of Christ. Near to his cross stood Mary his mother, her sister Mary, the mother of James, Mary Magdalene, and John. (John 19: 25, 26.) Further off (where, at first, these most intimate friends of Christ had also taken their station, till their affection for the beloved sufferer drew them nearer), were keeping their more timid place "many other women" (Mark 15: 41), even "all his acquaintances." (Luke 23: 49.) To these "other women" Luke seems to refer (24: 10), when speaking of the visits at the sepulchre. At the temporary interment of Christ on Friday evening, we find again not only Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, but also "women" "from Galilee" (Luke 23: 55), whom this Evangelist seems to distinguish, himself, from those (compare ch. 24: 10). Of all these friends present and deeply interested, were the three women mentioned by Matthew and Mark the only ones who craved the privilege of being active in the honorable interment of their common Lord and Master? I ween not. Rather should I suppose that more than two companies of females would have joined



them, had the body of Jesus been really anointed. Some of these pious women were rich. Joanna was among them, the wife of Chusa, who was Herod's steward; and probably Susanna was wealthy, and several others. They too (and what was more natural than that?) had their anxieties, by the way, who should remove for them the heavy stone from the mouth of the sepulchre. At the sepulchre they had expected to meet their three friends. But these had already fled, and so had the soldiers; and the angel on the tombstone had disappeared. The sepulchre is open; they enter in. The darkness of the cave at this early season did not permit them at first to distinguish whether Christ's body was there or not. But soon they are aware, to their astonishment, that the sepulchre is empty; and, behold! suddenly two angels appear, standing by them (Luke 24: 4). As the one angel acted who was sitting outside of the sepulchre upon the stone, when the other women came, so do these now. They comfort the pious females, commend their object, correct their mistake, and give them a message of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus to carry to the disciple. But let us mark a little here the difference and the agreement of the Evangelists. Matthew and Mark unitedly tell us that the two Marys and Salome went out to the sepulchre, saw *one* angel *outside* of the sepulchre, *sitting* upon the great stone by which it had been closed. Mark mentions their entering the garden (from the gate of which they had perceived the grave to be open) *towards* the sepulchre, where, situated as it was on their right hand as they entered, they behold the same *one angel sitting*. (Mark 16: 4, 5, Greek text.) Luke, on the other hand, speaks of a company of women who found no angel on the stone; who did enter the sepulchre, and who saw *two angels standing* by them. The words of the one angel



mentioned by Matthew and Mark agree substantially, and are plainly one and the same message; those spoken by the two angels are sufficiently different from these to form another message on the same great subject, given to *other women*, as they were given by *other angels*, and in *another place and posture*. Mary Magdalene, who had seen from the garden-gate the stone removed, when, a little later, she came the second time with Peter and John, and when these two were gone again, saw the same two angels mentioned by Luke now *sitting* within the sepulchre, where they had been seen *standing* by the second company of women. Thus far all is consistent. Equally so is the *result* of these visits, if rightly viewed. According to Matthew, "they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, and did run to bring the disciples word." (28: 8.) Mark says "They went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they anything to any man; for they were afraid." (16: 8.) Luke not only says of the women, in his account, that "they told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest," but mentions in particular Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and other women with them, as the bearers of the happy tidings (24: 9, 10). John speaks throughout of Mary Magdalene alone. But there is no real disagreement in all this. The natural solution of the whole is this, namely: The two Marys and Salome, and perhaps Joanna, were the most prominent characters among those women who went out to the sepulchre, and they intended naturally to take the lead in the work of anointing the body of Christ. Of these, the first three went out before the rest, very early, and two of them received the first message of the resurrection from the angel on the tomb-stone, and one had the first interview with

Christ. Of these Matthew, Mark and John, speak each from that point of view which suited best the plan of his Gospel. Luke, implying that they were not the only ones who visited the sepulchre, speaks of "women" "from Galilee." "They," says he, "and certain others with them,"—therefore certainly more than three,—came "very early in the morning" "unto the sepulchre." (24 : 1.) They found the stone rolled away, no angel upon it; and they entered the sepulchre, and had a vision of two angels. He has especially the other company of women in view, making *that* prominent which *they* saw and heard; not excluding, however, from his collective narrative, the party mentioned by the other two Evangelists, whose omissions in the history of the resurrection he wishes to supply. When the *facts* as they occurred severally at the sepulchre were stated, and the three Evangelists come to the effect and the results of these facts, they all three realize that two different companies of females resorted to the grave; and they state the result, not with reference to all of them, but only to those whom each Evangelist had in view when he arrived at that point of the narrative. Matthew speaks particularly of Mary the mother of James, and Salome, not excluding Mary Magdalene, when he says that they ran to bring the disciples word. Those women who said nothing to any one he leaves out of the account, as he is now hastening to the close of his Gospel. Mark, supplying the lack of Matthew, states that some of the women were so overwhelmed with what they saw and heard, that they said nothing to anybody (16 : 8). Then he proceeds with a brief allusion to Mary Magdalene's second visit at the sepulchre, and her interview with the Lord (of which John supplies the particulars), and to the two travellers to Emmaus, of whom Luke speaks more fully. Luke speaks also of the bearers of

the joyful news, mentioning as such two of the first company of women, and one of the second, "and other women," among whom, doubtless, was Salome; then proceeds to a full statement of what happened between Jerusalem and Emmaus. In the same manner, speaking of the effect which these messages produced upon the minds of the apostles, the Evangelists take different views, without contradicting one another. Matthew makes no allusion to it, for want of time. Mark, occupied at first with the fear of the women, which did not permit them to obey the divine command, proceeds to state the unbelief of some of the apostles. (16 : 11 ; and again 14.) Luke, intending to give a full view of the manner in which the apostles received the different accounts of the resurrection of Christ, and of the means by which they were ultimately fully convinced that Christ *was* risen, mentions their unbelief in the first accounts they heard of it (24 : 11); Peter's hesitancy in realizing the great fact (v. 12); how, in the course of the day, conviction was fastened upon Cleophas and his companion, and how all the apostles, save Thomas, were brought to the same full assurance of faith during the evening. John's particular accounts are perfectly consistent with all this, and with themselves. Upon these principles of narration, many accounts, if not most, of the first three Evangelists, are framed, and thousands of the most trustworthy narratives are going about the world, bearing exactly the same character.

The message which the angels gave to the women in two repeated instances seems at first inconsistent with fact. They send word to the disciples that Christ would see them in Galilee, whither they are ordered to proceed. But Christ appeared to the eleven, and to some others, sundry times, at Jerusalem, during the course of the very week already com-



menced. Even this very day he appeared to Peter and to the two disciples that went to Emmaus; and in the evening all the apostles saw him, except Thomas. A great handle has been made of this circumstance; but the solution is equally easy and satisfactory. Matt. 26: 32, and Mark 16: 7, Christ predicts his own death and resurrection, and adds that, after his resurrection, he will appear to his disciples in Galilee. This was a general hint to the disciples, and all his followers and brethren, to proceed to Galilee after his death; and certainly Galilee was a more safe and convenient place than Jerusalem for religious interviews, or meetings, where so many were to be present. Of this hint they, as a body, are now reminded. Why they did not all at once remove to Galilee, may have been owing to some private specification of time given by Christ previously, but not recorded; or, more probably, to the fact that Christ appeared unto them at Jerusalem the very evening after his resurrection, and afterwards again; on which account they waited until he should give them to know that it was now time to proceed to Galilee to the more general and long-promised meeting, where probably the five hundred brethren of whom Paul speaks were present. Meantime, the Passover-week was also closed, and the solemnities ended according to the law. And it is easy to see the propriety of their conduct in this respect. The appearance of Christ at Jerusalem, and to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, was merely intended to settle them in the conviction that he was alive again; and what was more necessary than this, if they were really to travel to Galilee to the mountain specified, to meet Christ there? These preparatory manifestations were never intended, therefore, to be announced to the disciples previously. The angels have no charge to speak of these sudden interviews, and Christ, as we



shall see from his words to Mary Magdalene, is purposely silent on this subject; purposely, I say, because he must have known, surely, what he was going to do; and yet he says not a word about it. Thus these fabricated difficulties all vanish.

It is worthy of notice, that this latter company of females had no interview with Christ himself; and it is to *these* that the two disciples walking to Emmaus had reference in Luke 24: 22, 23.

Now, Peter, John and Mary Magdalene, return. It is now fairly day, and the sun about to rise. They come somewhat late, probably because Peter and John lived in different parts of the city, and then they needed to get up, and dress, it being early yet; and it was almost unavoidable that they should propose many questions to the affrighted sister, and wish to hear her accounts fully, before they could resolve upon a visit to the grave at this season. At last they set out, and that they continued asking many an anxious and unbelieving question more, as they passed along, you may easily imagine. They feel, however, more and more interested; and, as they approach the garden, the younger disciple—that is, John—runs ahead. He stoops down and looks into the sepulchre; there are the linen clothes, but the body of Christ is really gone. Thus much is, however, clear now, the body is not stolen; for, had it been stolen, the costly linen would not have been carefully taken off the body, and left behind in the grave. Peter and Mary soon follow John. Now they all enter. There are the linen clothes, and the napkin, wrapped up, lies separately. All indicates care and order, and the heart of Mary is, at least, so far consoled, that it is now probable the body of the beloved Master is still in the hands of friends. John marks all the particulars well, and believes (John 20: 8), that is, gathers for himself the

conviction, that Jesus is taken away. "For as yet," he says himself, "they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." Satisfied, as they think, that there is nothing more to be done here, the two disciples return to the city, planning, perhaps, among themselves, to go as soon as possible to Joseph, and ask him what had become of the body, etc.

Poor human speculation is a miserable guide *to* piety and *in* piety. Here let the heart speak! There listen and follow, and do not grieve it to silence with cold reasoning. Poor Peter, and poor John! back they went, and many a wise remark may have been made by them, as they walked, to explain to each other the probable singular occurrence of this morning. Mary's burning love to Christ will not let her depart. *Here* they deposited him, and *here* she saw him on that melancholy evening; and *here* she seeks him, and cannot get away. To go back! — why, a king's palace would have been a wilderness to her. O! the grave was empty, and the world was empty. Whom had she in heaven but him, and there was none upon earth whom she desired besides him. There she stands, the lovely sister, at the entrance of the empty cave. Seven demons had possessed her not long since, and Jesus' powerful hand had freed her, poor sinner! and ever since she had enjoyed the foretaste of heaven in communion with him, and he had poured a thousand blessings on her soul. And now his enemies have murdered him, and even his friends carry his body about, and she knows not where he is, and is not permitted to do him the last melancholy service of love. It is too hard, it is too hard to bear; it seems to rend her soul from her. She stands, and thinks, and knows not where to go nor what to do; and the two disciples are hardly through the gate, when she wraps her face

in her garment, and a stream of tears rolls freely down her cheeks. Weep, dear child of God ! To weep for Christ is sweet. Blessed are they that weep thus : they shall be comforted. Yea, they *are* already comforted ; for one tear wept for him is worth a thousand worlds. “ O, that my head were waters, and mine eyes fountains of tears, that I might weep day and night ” for him who is “ the chief among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely.” There is none like unto him. Take him away, and I must curse my existence. If *he* is a phantom, if *he* is not, then “ let the day perish wherein I was born.”

How long she wept, who can tell ? She stoops down and looks into the *empty grave*,—most unjustifiable before the bar of reason, certainly, but most *consonant to her feelings*: to seek where there was nothing, apparently,—to seek, and to hope against hope. And, lo ! there are two men sitting in the grave. Her eyes, dim with weeping, did not permit her to distinguish, nor her state of mind *to reflect* ; and she takes them for attendants of Joseph, who may have entered, she thinks, while she was weeping. “ Woman, why weepest thou ? ” says one. “ Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have lain him.” So she. But hark ! something, some steps, perhaps, sound behind her, and she turns back to see who comes. It is a man. She knows him not. But who should come here so early, she thinks again ; he must be the gardener of Joseph, whose attendants she had just noticed in the grave. “ Woman, why weepest thou ? whom seekest thou ? ” he asks sweetly, and full of sympathy. “ Sir,” she replies, encouraged, “ if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast lain him, and I will take him away.” The pure language of affection,—affection so strong as to exclude for the moment



every maturer thought and reflection. "Why, Mary," he might have said, "what dost thou want to do with the body of thy deceased friend? His soul has fled, his mortal eyes and his sweet voice speak no more comfort to poor distressed souls. Till thou arrive in heaven, thou canst enjoy his society no more. His body of clay must moulder away. And why wilt thou not leave him 'earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust?'" And what could she have replied?—Nothing. But our Lord understands and appreciates well the language of the heart. The moment was come. "Mary!" he says, and the harmony of heaven thrills in his voice. "Mary!" Amazed, she looks at him. Is it he? It is he! and alive! The transition is too rapid; the joy too great:—"Rabboni! Master!" and she lies at his feet. O, heaven on earth! what is like unto that moment, when the first "Rabboni" bursts from our hearts and lips? Now, O now, it is worth while to live. Now let me live forever! for Jesus lives, and is my friend. And

"When he is mine, and I am his,  
What can I want beside?"

Now "truly the light is sweet, and it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun." Now there is meaning in my existence. I am a man, I am a man now; while before I was a poor brute, a silly, wandering sheep. It is done; the great problem of my existence is solved; the poor heart is satisfied at last, and eternity shines brighter than the firmament of heaven.

Jesus, ever the same, ever divine, replies, with heavenly calmness, "Touch me not," Mary. This is no time for embracing my knees, for kissing my hands, for watering my feet with thy tears. We shall meet again. "For I am not



yet ascended to my Father. But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and to your Father, and to my God and to your God."

Here closes the history of this morning,—a morning of unutterable interest to our world and to our souls, and one never to be repeated. Yet, while all these events transpire, an iron slumber rests upon yonder Jerusalem. There the priests and Levites, lifeless hirelings, sleep, jaded with the tiresome exercises of the sanctuary, with which they would gladly have dispensed, had they known how to get money without them. There is slumbering the thoughtless multitude, well satisfied with the round of external performances, and the sacrifices of bulls and goats. There you find Pilate, and Herod, and many a Dives, rolling, half sleeping, half awake, upon his uneasy couch, writhing under the consequences of a wild nightly banquet. And if any one is fairly awake, it is the miser worshipping upon the knees of his heart his accursed mammon. A picture of the world, drawn to the very life. While Christ rises as the almighty friend and Saviour of sinners, before those "who seek him early," the world give themselves no concern. "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of hands. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man." Prov. 6: 10. "Sleep on now, thoughtless, careless souls, and take your rest," but know that the sword of divine justice hangs menacing over your defenceless heads. There is one among the nights to come, and you know it not, when in the solitary midnight hour the knell of your dying bell shall wake you up from the slumber of sin. Affrighted, you will look about, and, behold, your sands are run out, and the icy, merciless hand of death has hold upon your heart-string, to tear it asunder as a spider's thread, and to cast your unpre-

pared, distracted soul, into the unexplored abyss of eternity ! O ! what a moment that will be ! Forever gone by is now the slighted day of mercy, the time of repentance and faith, whose merciful and glorious purpose, whose all-absorbing importance, you will then perceive with horror, and with the outbursting lamentation, "Woe is unto me ; for the harvest is past, the summer ended, and I am not saved."

But let us close with the lovely part of our picture. There are many mourning souls and weeping Marys in Zion, and unto them I could wish to open the whole treasury of heavenly consolation, if I was able. But, if I am not able to do it, the solemn history of this morning shows them who is able, and how to get access to him.

Nothing is so wonderful as the first waking up to a spiritual life ; nothing so delightful as the first love, the first grateful emotion, of the sinner who has "obtained mercy" and pardon. There the tabernacle of God is with man, and heaven is begun on earth. The fountain of life is open, and springs high before the withering, languishing soul ; and she drinks in energy and life and joy divine ; her "peace" is "like a river," and her "righteousness as the waves of the sea." The dew of heaven descends gently and refreshing, and the early rain and the latter rain fail not ; eternal comfort and prosperity have commenced. To sit at the feet of Jesus, to live under the smiles of his countenance, and to breathe the atmosphere of heaven,—what more can be wanting to perfect earthly bliss ? We, then, wish and pray that this happy state may last forever ; we fondly hope it will ; and, if we were faithful and kept humble, it would. But the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, and its thorough cure is not the work of a day. Unfaithfulness, a false trust in means, self-complacency, and many

other secret besetting sins, must be purged away by darkness and distress of mind, and many a trial. And, O ! this is a bitter lesson to him who has tasted how good and how precious the Lord is. Now he is ready to endure anything, if Christ will not withdraw from him his love and the hope of salvation. No more to be permitted to say, "My beloved is mine and I am his," is harder to bear than the curse and contempt of all this world. "O that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness; as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle; when I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil!" These are days of weeping and lamentation, and nights of wakefulness and distress; and no man can help us, and our desolate heart seems to be armed with steel and adamant against every drop of comfort. Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? Then Christ is dead and buried to us, and we know not where they have laid him, and we seek him whom our soul loveth, but we find him not. Well, my suffering brother or sister, mourn and weep; it will do you good. To weep for Christ is sweet. But, I beseech you, do not despair. Your Saviour is not dead, but liveth; go and seek him! If the bustle of the busy world, and the multitude of duties, will not permit you to seek him by day or in the evening, then seek him in the night season, like the Shulamite, or rise up early in the morning, like Mary, when it begins to dawn, when all is stillness about you. Prepare the ointment of a grateful remembrance of his dying love to you; seek his silent grave. There weep; it is a good place; there pour out your soul. He will hear every sob of your bosom, and notice every solitary, unheeded tear of distress.

Soon the dear Rabboni will whisper behind you, with the voice of unutterable love, "Mary!" — here I am, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled; thou art mine, and none shall pluck thee out of my hand. And you, leaning again upon your beloved, as in days past, will exclaim, as you did then, "Lord, it is enough, for thou art mine!" Amen.



## X I.

### THE WALK TO EMMAUS.

And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jérusalem about three-score furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that while they communed together, and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden, that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people; and how the Chief Priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel; and, besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, That they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said; but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went; and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it

came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. — LUKE 24: 13—35.

JERUSALEM was yet buried in deep sleep, and its dwellings, streets and markets, were silent as the grave. Caiaphas is indulging his morning slumbers beneath the silk curtains of his damask couch. The Nazarene is buried in the cold tomb, and the soldiers of Pilate and the broad seal of his holiness guard the sepulchre. Sweet dreams of the future prosperity of that lucrative hierarchy whose head he is,—a hierarchy growing and expanding in his imagination, until the arrival of that warlike Messiah who is to raise for every circumcised rebel and wretch a golden throne of infernal selfishness upon the blood and the ruins of a poor, perishing world,—sweet dreams, in point of moral character not a whit above the feigned imaginations of Satan in Milton's "Paradise Lost," occupy and refresh the mind and heart of Caiaphas, when the heavy knocker of his palace gate is touched with a hasty and powerful hand. He starts up. What is the matter? Perhaps one of the fatlings of my flock is near death, and wants to purchase, for his last hour, the precious consolations of Sinai's law. For, surely, a lean and poor sheep ought to be happy to go to eternity under the cheaper prayers of a simple Levite. He listens, reclining upon one arm, one foot already out of his bed, when his chamberlain approaches his bed-chamber with steps long and quick, and before the door gives

the usual sign for being admitted. He is called in, and interrogated. "The soldiers from the sepulchre of the Nazarene are below, and wish to see your holiness on important and pressing business." "The soldiers from the sepulchre?—Not possible!"—"With your leave, sir, the very ones." One minute, and the High Priest is in his dress. "Lead them into the private council-chamber below, and call the whole Sanhedrim together quickly." The Sanhedrim assembled, the Roman officer at the head of the guard is called in and relates some of the facts to which we attended in our last Meditation, and the seventy wise men of Israel are again at their wits' end,—at their *wits'* end, but not at the end of their *wickedness*. Is he indeed risen? No matter. One lie more, and why not one thousand?—and truth will perish at last, and the cause of Satan prosper. "Here is a handsome present for your trouble and fright, my brave fellows," says the High Priest. "Just say to the common people, who know not the law and are cursed,—just say, We slept, and his disciples stole him. And if Pilate should say aught, we will give him such a hint of the true state of the case, and accompany the hint with such an appendix from our treasury, as will avert from you all undesirable consequences of your kind services to us." The soldiers depart, the Sanhedrim adjourns, not without those secret misgivings which have well been called the beginning of judgment to come. You ask why I relate this event. To connect the history of the *forenoon* and the *afternoon* of our Lord's resurrection-day by *this* event, the only one which remained to be mentioned among the many and various occurrences of that important morning. The sun rose, and filled the city again with noise and bustle, and the temple with sacrifices, fire, incense, songs and psalms, with purchasers and sellers, and with the large



assembly of formalists and hypocrites, mingled with a few humble and sincere worshippers, upon whom a better day was soon to dawn. The sun reached his meridian height and passed it, and, as he descended, two more appearances of our risen Lord signalized this in the history of our world unparalleled day. I refer to his appearance to Peter (which the entire absence of particulars obliges us to pass by), and to the event related in our text. To the consideration of this portion of Holy Writ let us now attend, with solemnity of mind and with sincere desires for spiritual instruction and profit; and may He with whom is the residue of the spirit prepare our minds, guide our thoughts, and seal instruction to our hearts.

I. THE CONVERSATION OF THE TWO DISCIPLES.

II. THEIR REPROOF AND INSTRUCTION.

III. THE DIVINE ILLUMINATION OF THEIR MINDS.

IV. THE JOY OF THEIR HEARTS.

These are the four topics to which our attention will chiefly be turned.

I. "And behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about three-score furlongs."—Who were they? One of them was Cleopas, most probably, the husband of that Mary who was the sister of the mother of Christ. He was also the brother of Joseph, the supposed father of our Lord. He was one of those who belonged to the *narrower circle* of the friends of Christ, and who remained in the most intimate connection with the apostles ever afterwards. And if Nathaniel was the other, I should not be surprised. At all events, this other one also must have been one of the more trusty and sincere friends of our Lord,—one waiting for the kingdom of heaven, and fully prepared to enter into all the feelings of that



little flock which then was scattered as sheep without a shepherd. All which these two men knew of the occurrences of the morning was the account of the *second* company of women who went to anoint the body of Christ, and that of Peter and John's subsequent visit to the sepulchre. Or if, indeed, Mary, the wife of Cleopas, and Salome, brought home the positive news that Christ was risen, and that they had seen him, their testimony, already invalid by Jewish laws and customs, was received with distrust by most of the disciples, as Peter and John had been to the sepulchre, but did not find the Lord. Having heard these limited and imperfect accounts, which contained nothing of comfort to them, our two pilgrims set out on foot for Emmaus, a village about seven and a half miles from Jerusalem. Either they lived there, or they went out on business; or perhaps they wished to withdraw a little from the noise and the distractions of that city, which now had become to them an intolerable abode. The latter supposition is more agreeable both to the state of *their minds* and the nature of their conversation, and especially to the fact that Christ thought them prepared to receive that distinguishing manifestation of his love to them, those solemn instructions, and those soul-refreshing communications of his Spirit and his grace, which, as we shall see, were their peculiar and blessed privilege that day. You are aware that these two men were sufficiently enlightened already to expect no warlike prince in the Messiah. With *them* he was to be a *prince of peace*, a teacher of righteousness, the restorer of primitive innocence, simplicity and happiness, the comfort and glory of Israel, who, by the means of superior wisdom, righteousness and love, should bring all the kings of the earth to a willing submission to his sceptre. A week ago, their voices had joined on the Mount of Olives in a peaceful

and holy song of praise to the Son of David, who came to Jerusalem, meek and lowly, riding on an ass; and they had no objection then to his peaceful and humble exterior. They knew him too well to expect any other administration from him than that of equity and love; and what they were ignorant of was only the pervading spirituality of his kingdom, the free, grand, sovereign dispensation of its mercies to all ready to receive them; and especially the *manner* in which it was to come,—that is, through reproach, weakness, and death.

They have hardly passed the gates of Jerusalem, when one of them, breaking the silence, gives vent to his feelings in some such strain as this: “Well, my dear brother, he is dead, our Master is no more! I cannot, *cannot* believe it; it seems like a distressing, doleful dream to me, that he should have been scourged and crucified and buried; but, alas, alas! it is but too true. And if a man be dead, shall he live again? O, where is the promise of his coming, and the hope of Israel? And must we die without seeing the salvation of God’s people? According to the prophets, the time *is* at hand, and he himself said and did many things which justified our expectations of him; and he was a man dear to us, and full of the wisdom, power and Spirit, of God. When the ear heard him, then it blessed him; and when the eye saw him, it gave witness to him. He taught with power, and not as our Scribes; and when he spoke comfort, it was like manna and milk. I thought, It cannot fail us, this blessed hope. Soon every heart will love him; the world will choose him for her friend and for her king, and the glory and salvation of Israel draweth nigh. But, ah! he moulders in the dust — *he is dead — he is dead* — and the glowing spark of my fond-

est hope is now extinguished in the deep darkness of his grave."

And the reply of his companion was equally replete with sorrow: "O, stop! you break my heart! You know I loved him as much as any one of you did; and, ah! I cannot forgive it to our High Priests. It was abominable! And, were it not for their sacred office, I should curse them with the heaviest imprecation of the law. Could I but have died with him, then I should be at ease and rid of trouble, and rest with my fathers, for I am weary of life. But you heard, I suppose, of Chuza's wife, and the rest who went to the sepulchre, and saw angels who said he lived; and of Peter and John;—and was not your wife there too?—they all found the grave open, and what do you think?" "Ah! as to the women," the other rejoined, "it was dark when they went out, and they were fearful, and thought they saw and heard something. Peter and John went out when it was clear day, and they found nothing but an empty grave; and what does that prove? Or, will you rest your faith upon the testimony of females? After all, we have been mistaken about our pious friend. A holy, good brother he was, and indeed he seems to have thought himself the Messiah,—or we misunderstood him, it may be; mistakes are easy. At all events, the Messiah he was not; for he is dead and buried, and Israel is not delivered, and the kingdom of God has not come."

So they.—Events like the death of Christ, and mistakes like those of our disciples, are very common in the history of the church. In this world, Herod is king, and Caiaphas High Priest, and Christ is condemned and crucified time and again, and his people are laughed to scorn as fools, and trodden under foot and cast out as the offscouring of the world. Where is the truly pious king, in all the eighteen centuries of



our era, who had faith and devotion enough wholly to lay down his crown and sceptre at the feet of Christ, whose cabinet was not more or less based upon the low principles of brute force and self-interest, and whose course was not defiled with the maxims and practices of the world? Can anything be more scarce than such a king? What has the true church of Christ yet experienced on earth, more than bare sufferance? Blessed be God, she needs no more; and, if that also be denied her, she needs not that! She knows, and she alone, how to grow and spread amid the terrors of persecution. She has realized the fable of the phoenix coming forth young and fresh from the burning furnace, and has done so more than once. But, while the storm roars and the flames of persecution rage, the faith of many Christians is tried severely, and many a half-despairing glance and many a half-murmuring sigh ascends to heaven. The apostolic age had not yet expired, when the streets of Rome were already illuminated by burning Christians wrapped in pitch-cloth, while others, disguised in wild beasts' skins, were hunted down and torn to pieces by dogs. The blood of more than forty thousand Christians was spilled before the close of the first century. Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Antoninus, Severus, Maximinus, Decius, Valerian, Aurelian and Dioclesian, made havoc of the little inoffensive flock of Christ. Under the latter monarch seventeen thousand fell in one month, and within ten years one hundred and forty-four thousand fell in Egypt alone, besides seven hundred thousand that died in public works to which they were condemned, and in banishment. Against the handful of poor, ignorant Waldenses, who had nothing and knew nothing but their Bible, the Inquisition must be raised, and the judgment-day alone will disclose the horrors of its unexplored caverns and jails. One single Arian queen from



among the northern nations butchered one hundred thousand Trinitarians before she died. Under the hand of the mad Spaniards there fell in Holland upwards of one hundred thousand so-called heretics. France needs but to be mentioned to excite horror and disgust. All that is cruel, all that is shameless, was practised upon Protestant heretics there. Bartholomew's night, in 1572, will be a prominent and absorbing case in the decisions of the judgment-day. Besides the scenes of Paris, those of Meaux, Angers, Orleans, Troyes, Bourges, La Charité and Lyons, will come to light; nor will the bloody high-mass of Gregory XIII. at Rome, with his cardinals, and all their pomp and exultation, be forgotten, by which they commemorated the death of one hundred thousand innocent persons. Louis XIV. of France, the admired monarch, the great man (though Lucifer is greater than he), committed outrages against Christians which Nero and Dioclesian did not commit. The scenes of England are too familiar to my audience to need a mention. About the middle of the seventeenth century, from forty to fifty thousand defenceless individuals suffered death within a few days in Ireland. And Scotland, Spain, Germany, Bohemia, etc., would furnish us with facts sufficient to fill the world with them. And how could the church live, you ask? How she lived, I cannot tell; but that she did live, we know. Yea, what I have mentioned could not impede her growth. Under such circumstances, the church not only lived, but budded and blossomed like Carmel and Sharon. But, when I think of the sealing up of the Bible till the art of printing was invented; when I think of the one thousand years' darkness from Augustine to Luther; when I think of all the ruinous errors, in doctrine and practice, which crept at different times into Christendom; when I think of all the sects which

sprung up, and whose very names would fill pages; when I think of all the scientific and literary crusades made against the Bible; when I think of the calm, strong-minded scepticism of England, by which the five senses which every animal has in common with us were made to defy and to silence the divine voice within man, and the foreboding of eternity,—or of the sparkling wit and the learned atheism of France, by which they meant to prove that their souls and ours were made of mud,—or of the criticisms and metaphysics of Germany, that were to convert us, the one into grammars and lexicons, the other into vapor and nothing; when I think of these batteries, all directed against the simple tale of the Gospel, all contrived and managed by the arch-fiend of everything good and holy, to tear from us the truth as it is in Jesus, I am amazed, I am overwhelmed, I must cry out, “Lord, was it possible that the church could live?” Yes, it was. Was not thy word, whose every syllable has been doubted, examined, distorted, denied, mocked, cursed, prohibited,—was it not buried up in eternal oblivion, or torn in piecemeal and scattered to the four winds of heaven? No! no! The word and church of Christ stand yet untouched, and while HE stands they will. Though Herod be king on earth and Caiaphas High Priest, Jesus is both King and High Priest in heaven! But, while all this is going on, many a dejected Cleopas, wandering to Emmaus with his fellow-sufferers, exclaims, “Ah! we trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel!”

We proceed to our second topic, and then will they find their answer.

II. The road to Emmaus was a solitary one, especially at this time. Our pilgrims had ample opportunity to unbosom themselves freely. They were in no particular hurry; they

walked along,—now slower, now quicker, now they stop, then they proceed again, just as men are apt to do who are engaged in an absorbing and affecting theme of conversation. By and by a solitary stranger overtakes them. They take him for a pilgrim from abroad, and his appearance is so prepossessing and lovely that they proceed with their conversation, void of any apprehension. The stranger, instead of passing on ahead of them, seems inclined to keep them company; and, after the usual salutation of peace, he addressed them in some such way as this: “Men and brethren, I perceive your minds and hearts are deeply engaged in a serious though melancholy subject of conversation. I, too, feel interested in whatsoever concerns a higher and better world than this; and the promises of God, the hope of Israel, and the spiritual welfare of every soul under heaven, are subjects very near and dear to my heart. But I have not been able to gather any meaning or connection from your abrupt exclamations and remarks. What manner of communications, then, are these, that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? Those that fear the Lord speak often one to another, as the prophet says; and who knows what spiritual enjoyment and comfort a free, brotherly exchange of feeling, and of divine knowledge, may yield us by the way?” Cleopas and his companion no sooner discern in this stranger a pious brother, than they unburden their hearts in the lively and affecting manner of our text, expecting, probably, many questions, and much of wonder and perplexity, on the part of the foreigner. But, what was their surprise, think you, when they perceived his sweet countenance overspreading with something of that same divine ease and calmness, and his pensive eye glancing away, as it were, over the plains of heaven and eternity, with that same profound and enrapturing intensity, which they used to think



the exclusive characteristics of their deceased Rabbi of Nazareth? How strange, when he opened his lips to express his astonishment at nothing save their unbelief, and when, after the faithful and tender reproof, he commenced a course of divine instruction, which expanded their minds to a thousand new ideas, and poured a river of consolation and joy into their wounded hearts! “O, ye fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” What! have you forgotten that the woman’s seed, the Restorer of the fall, will not crush the serpent’s head without having his own heel crushed first? You know the universal law of conscience recognized by the sacrifices of Moses, that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin; and the universal law of reason recognized by the repetition of those sacrifices, that the blood of beasts cannot take it away,—and do you draw no inference from this? Moses has told you, “Cursed is every one that abideth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them;” and again he has told you, “Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree;” and the Messiah is to redeem you from the curse of the broken law, and your lamented friend has been hanged on a tree,—and does not the grand and cheering inference meet you at the very threshold? What meaneth the brazen serpent which Moses raised for the healing of the people? Have you altogether forgotten the opposition of the kings and princes of the earth to Jehovah, and to his Son, as it is described in the second Psalm; and the Messiah’s sufferings in the twenty-second and the sixty-ninth Psalms, and the glory which was to follow? But, if all this has escaped your attention, how was it possible for you to overlook what Isaiah says of the small beginning of the Messiah’s reign, of his sufferings,



reproaches and death, as the atonement for the sins of a world; of the opposition of the Jews to their own Saviour, and of the previous salvation of the heathen world, before Israel will return to God as a people, and look upon him whom they have pierced? Are all your Priests and Scribes able to explain to you that portion of Isaiah which begins, "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently," etc., unless they admit that the Messiah is first to die for your sins, and then to rise and to reign forever? They are not nor will they ever be able. Is not the Messiah to be smitten as a shepherd, and his disciples to be scattered as sheep? Is not "the Messiah" to be "cut off, but not for himself," "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the visions and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy," his spiritual sanctuary, the church on earth, and prepare the temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, for the reception of all his followers into never-ending rest and glory?

Thus, only more at large and infinitely better, did our blessed Lord expound to the astonished pilgrims of Emmaus the law and the prophets, and, indeed, "all the counsel of God." And, above all things, he introduced them into the great secret of his kingdom, namely, that the way to glory for Christ himself, for his word, his doctrine and his people, leads through Gethsemane, over Calvary, through the valley of the shadow of death, through shame and blame undeserved, through much weakness, tribulation, and fear. A secret which neither the world nor Satan will understand, though they hear it ringing in their ears from every truly Christian pulpit, until they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Such scenes

have been repeated, on a larger or smaller scale, innumerable times. It is but a few years since, that, in some Christian countries, unbelieving hirelings were obtruded by the civil arm upon a thousand congregations, to feed the poor people with the empty straw of moral essays, and with the apostate speculations of corrupt universities; and to approach, in the midst of God's church and people, the throne of glory with senseless, heartless, printed mockeries, in the form of prayers and liturgies. Strict attendance to divine worship was ordered, and every kind and degree of methodism and mysticism — that is, all social prayer-meetings, and Bible-reading, and pious conversation — severely forbidden. Many were doomed to prison, many were beaten, many who could fly fled. In another country, which then professed great attachment to vital godliness, the proceedings of the Bible society were stopped at once; pious ministers were exiled, unheard and uncondemned, and the people were left like sheep without a shepherd. And I have seen the effects with my eyes, and heard them with my ears. O, what pale faces! O, what sighs, doubts, and fears! "We trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel!" But to these, and all in similar distress, we can only say, "O, (ye) fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" Come, open your blessed Bible, read its pages, and in the light thereof view once more the changing scenes of this world, and you will soon perceive a mutual agreement and a symmetry which abundantly demonstrate the presence of a divine hand in either case. Why is Abel slain, and Cain permitted to live? Why is Enoch, whose pious influence was so much needed, taken away, while Nimrod builds cities and towers, and plants kingdoms, and tyrannizes over the world? Why is Abraham a wanderer and stranger, while the Canaan-

ite possesses and defiles the land of promise? Why must Jacob flee, and Esau remain in the paternal house? Why is David a fugitive in the earth, while the reprobated Saul possesses the kingdom? Why must Jonathan, the noble, pious prince, fall in battle, and Ishbosheth live to trouble David, and by his ambition to occasion the slaughter of thousands? Why are the prophets of Jehovah killed by Jezebel, like sheep, and the priests of Baal and Ashtaroath live and riot upon the sweat of the poor, and corrupt the ignorant? Why must Elijah, who had been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts, make his escape like a thief, and Jezebel remain on her throne, to reëstablish the impure worship of Jupiter and of Venus? Why must the infant Jesus flee to Egypt, and Herod sit quietly in Jerusalem? And why were the holy prophets constantly "persecuted and slain," and why did the apostles die the death of martyrs, and Stephen with them, and multitudes of others? Why? — The kingdom of Christ is not of this world, and the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. This is the strait and narrow path which leadeth unto life, and there is none other. But be of good cheer, you who suffer for righteousness' sake, — your path leads unto life. Though Herod be king on earth, and Caiaphas be High Priest, Jesus is both King and High Priest in heaven.

III. But we must hasten to return to our travellers, for they are already drawing near to Emmaus.

While the dear stranger uttered his "gracious words, Cleopas and his companion observed the most profound and respectful silence. They listened as to words of eternal life; and, indeed, that they would have been, had they been accompanied by no higher gift. But, when Jesus speaks, he speaks more than words. While speaking, he communicated to their



minds that heavenly unction without which no true knowledge of divine things ever existed. He opened their minds, that they understood the Scriptures. They were distinctly conscious of this fact, though their attention was not called to it until "he vanished out of their sight." "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" That I interpret this passage rightly, you may see from a comparison of v. 45, where it is said, in reference to the apostles, "Then opened he (Christ) their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." Here, the meaning cannot be restricted to mere verbal expositions of Scripture passages; for that privilege the apostles had enjoyed for more than three years, and still their understanding was most evidently not "opened." On this important subject I shall have more to say, when, Providence permitting, we shall come to a consideration of the passage just quoted. Here it may suffice to observe, that the thing spoken of in either passage is that divine illumination of the mind by which the spiritual meaning, beauty and power, of divine truth, is revealed to the quickened and sanctified apprehension of man. This divine light is the exclusive privilege of the renewed heart, and is common to all the children of God. It is distinct from the Spirit of inspiration afterwards communicated to the apostles, as we shall see on that future opportunity already alluded to. It is distinct, also, from the oral instruction of Christ. Hundreds of times he had given oral instruction to thousands; but it is nowhere said that he opened the understanding of the people, or even of the apostles; nor did they, in reality, ever understand him wholly. Here this gift is first mentioned; it is mentioned distinct from the oral instructions themselves, and, therefore, differs from them, if the Evangelist spoke sense.



O that I could now dip my pen in the river of life, or in the crystal sea, or in the rainbow around the throne of God, to portray, in all its supernatural beauty, the wondrous moment when the heavy scales of sin and gross sense drop from the eyes of the repenting sinner, and the realities of the kingdom of heaven are revealed to him through the mirror of the divine Word! Men and brethren, it is no vision, no dream, no morbid state of mind. It is sound, wakeful reality; and the mind which experiences what I say is calm as the breathless ocean, and clear as a sunbeam, and as the new-created star of Bethlehem. On the contrary, the common frame of mind, in which we are by nature, appears then comparatively like a distressing, feverish dream, like a strange delirium or stupor, to which we look back with terror and amazement.

If you permit me an imperfect comparison, I should liken a man whose mind becomes enlightened on divine subjects to a lost traveller groping through the blackness of night, amid the howling of a storm and the pelting rain. The country is unknown to him, and perilous; and he feels carefully his uncertain and slippery way with his staff, to avoid the precipices which surround him. O, how he wishes for the day! At last, the east begins to dawn; he can select his steps; his path seems to lie on an eminence, but the valley beneath and the horizon around are still wrapped in a thick, impenetrable fog. As yet all is dreariness and chill, and heaven and earth seem to be in sackcloth. By and by, the golden sun rises, and

“ Pillows his chin upon an orient wave ;  
The flocking shadows pale  
Troop to the infernal jail, —  
Each fettered ghost slips to his several grave.”

The gilded mountain-tops proclaim a clear and cheerful day ;

the rays of the sun pierce the vapors in a thousand directions; cloud after cloud takes wing, and speeds away, till they leave to our traveller the wonderful spectacle of a boundless landscape, set with all the jewelry of the morning dew, and glowing with the purity and the freshness of Paradise, as far and wide as the eye can reach. But what have we been about? Has our "parable" done at all justice to its subject? Can a mere *shadow* do justice to *reality*? Verily, I am tired myself of words and comparisons so unfit for my purpose. O that I could open the eyes of those here who do not understand me, to see my meaning! How astonished would they be, and how would we all rejoice together in the blessed contemplation and prospect of a better world! But to give you that illumination of mind is the prerogative of Jesus; and to him must I commend your case. Remember this; you know not what your Bible is,—you never will know it till you seek and find the light of heaven.

#### IV. We hasten to the close.

Our pilgrims have now arrived at Emmaus. They stand before the door of that pious family where the two disciples intended to put up for the night. The stranger wants to proceed, but they urge him to remain. "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." How can we, dearest brother, part with thee so soon? Our hearts long to be filled with thy blessed company, pious stranger; and, then, it is evening, and the night comes apace, and we should love so much to make thee comfortable here. Abide with us, dearest one; and, if thou wilt condescend to teach us still further, we will listen to thee, and pray and hope and rejoice with thee, till the rising sun, and then thou shalt depart in peace. Therefore, "abide with us." The stranger yields, and they enter in. Soon the frugal supper is prepared, and

they sit down to the meal. The dignified stranger assumes the place and office of the host, and the two travellers cheerfully and respectfully yield to him that privilege. He takes the bread and looks up; they look on with amazement;—"What a look is this! what a glance into the third heaven! Is this our dear,—no, impossible!" He gives thanks,—and they are ready to sink to the ground with wonder, fear and joy. "It is his voice—it is his voice!" Now their eyes are opened. "Yes, these are his very looks, and we knew him not, the dearest Master!" They rise to clasp him in their arms; but he vanishes out of their sight. To paint their surprise and their feelings would be a vain endeavor. Their hearts overflow with joy. The supper remains untouched on the table; and, late as it is, they go, yea, they *run* back to Jerusalem, to bring word to the eleven. Breathless, they burst into the room. They find them in one place assembled, and, as they enter, it echoes from every side, "The Lord has risen, and has appeared to Simon." "Yea, and to us, too," they reply; and relate the whole of the event, interrupting one another in their haste.

"Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us?" Indeed, and well might they. Divine knowledge gives divine joy. The man whose religion consists in cold speculation and a cheerless orthodoxy is a starving, perishing soul. But that man who feels his sins forgiven and his iniquities pardoned, who knows his name written in heaven and his peace made with God,—that man's heart *burns*. Away he flies, to seek like-feeling souls, that may help his inexperienced voice to strike up a joyful psalm of gratitude and love. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Taught by the unction of which we spoke, he knows, he *feels* what the unbelieving scholar's eye, or ear, or

heart, never experienced; he feels the meaning of the sacred poet, when he sings, “My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the *winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.* Already the fig-tree embalmeth her fruit, and the budding vines smell sweetly. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. O thou, *my dove in the clefts of the rocks and in the hiding-places of the rough precipice!* Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely. Take us the foxes, the little foxes which destroy the vineyard; for our vineyards are all one blossom. It is enough that my beloved is mine, and I am his,—his, who feedeth among the lilies. At the evening breeze, O my friend, and when the stretching shadows flee away, then return thou unto me, like a roe or a young hart, over the dividing hills.” And let no profane and wordly-minded sage check or mock the sacred overflowings of the new-born soul; or let him first take away the soothing, healing power of the balm of Gilead, and destroy the consolations of the cross of Christ, the soul-stirring energies of eternal truth, and the powers of the world to come. Let him not dare to stretch beyond his *line* (short, alas! it is), nor judge of things which he never felt. As well might you prevent the birds from singing, and the lilies from blossoming, when the genial powers of spring move in the bosom of the earth. Are there any of my readers whose hearts never *burnt* as HE spoke unto them, and as HE opened to them the Scriptures?—Your case is one which calls for tender pity; your life is not worth having; and, if you die as you lived, your existence is a curse. But your case is one, too, which



calls for unsparing reproof. Our disciples, as they walked along, "talked together of all these things which had happened" at Jerusalem,—and then "*Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.*" But of what have you talked by the way thus far,—of what are you talking? Give, now, I pray you; glory to the Lord, and make confession unto him; have you not talked about anything but Christ and his cross? Of fashions, amusements, of politics and literature, at best, you converse; and is religion not worth one of your moments? Say, now, what would be your feelings if some Christian friend should endeavor to talk with you faithfully on the subject of religion? You know it, and I know it, too; but do you think that thus Jesus himself will ever draw near to you and walk with you? Never!

But you, who know the love of Christ, let us close this Meditation by joining with one consent in the petition of our two pilgrim brethren. Lord, "abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." Some of us have passed the meridian of life, and our evening may soon draw near. When our sun sets and our eyes grow dim, when the night of death surrounds us, and every earthly comfort fails,—O, then "abide with us"! When we can no more read thy word, when our tongues can no more talk of all these things, nor our ears perceive the voice of prayer and Christian consolation and sympathy,—O, then "abide with us"! Or, if the sun of every earthly comfort must set upon us,—if contempt, or poverty, or nakedness, or hunger, or persecution, or peril by land and sea, or the solitude of a long and painful sick bed, must ever try our faith and obedience, and no Christian brother can stand by us,—O, then "abide *Thou* with us"! Let us hear Thy voice, saying, "It is I, fear not," and we will not fear, not murmur. Or, if we must long sojourn in

Mesech and dwell in the tents of Kedar,—if our souls must long dwell with them that hate peace, far, far away, at a hopeless distance from the earthly sanctuary of our God, where our friends and kindred dwell,—O, then “abide with us,” for it is evening with us—it is evening; our best years are gone by, and our day is far spent. When none will walk with us, then draw thou near. When none will speak with us, then speak thou unto us words of life and joy; come in and tarry with us, and bless and break unto us the bread of life. If thou be with us, we will be content while we live. We will remember that our life is but a hasty pilgrimage, but three-score furlongs, but a vapor which appeareth for a little while, a shadow, a short and foolish dream; but that

“There is a land of pure delight,  
Where saints immortal reign,”

and where we shall see THEE whom our soul loveth, and all thy people, forever. Amen.

## XII.

### THE GREAT EVENING.

And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey-comb. And he took it, and did eat before them. And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures; and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoveth Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. — LUKE 24: 36—48.

Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. — JOHN 20: 19—23.

NOTHING would be more imperfect and inadequate than to suppose the various appearances of our Lord, after his resurrection, were intended merely to convince his disciples and other followers of his being risen from the dead. Such a view would confine us to the mere fraction of a plan, deep-cast, penetrating both the minds of men and the veil of futurity, beyond everything predicable of a *man's* contrivance in the exercise of his most unusual powers. We must keep in mind that when *we* hear of the resurrection of Christ a very different idea is conveyed to *our* minds, if we possess at all a knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures, from that which the disciples could have derived from such tidings. *They* had no New Testament in their hands; no eighteen Christian centuries behind them, to unlock unto them the profound signification of their Lord's resurrection. He is risen from the dead! Joyful news! But the first idea which must have struck them is, "Well, Lazarus also was raised from the dead, and several others in past times. But, of course, they rose again merely to live a few years longer, and then to die again and sleep with their fathers. Is the resurrection of our Lord like unto theirs? And why should it not be? He will live with us; he will teach us a few years more; he will, perhaps, after all, establish some earthly kingdom, and, on his ultimate peaceful and honorable exit from this world, will leave Israel, and, perhaps, the whole world, in that condition of perfect piety, peace and prosperity, for which we are sighing." How inadequate this, though much improved, conception would have been, and how unlike to the transcendently spiritual plan of Christ, needs no mention. Or, they might have thought, "Some of the saints, too, which slept, have risen and 'appeared unto many;' and so is he also risen, and they will go to heaven together, and we shall by and by follow



them, and be forever happy with them ; and this is all which he means by his appearing unto us." Comfortable, indeed, would this idea have been ; but still, how short of the whole reality before us, is obvious again. They needed to be taught, not merely that *he was risen from the dead*, but also that his existence was, though really *bodily*, yet so spiritual at the same time, and so divinely independent, as to be calculated for a rational and moral foundation, upon which was to be reared the great doctrine of the spiritual, yet real, communion and intercourse which he held with the apostles, and still holds with every believer, to the ends of the earth and to the utmost limits of time : an intercourse, you remember, which no glorified saint in heaven can hold with you, and infinitely less with all believers over the world. With the whole mature and profound conception and conviction of this his elevated existence after his resurrection, there stood necessarily, and closely connected, the whole nature of his future plans, his kingdom, the means of its promotion, the certainty of its success, the spiritual interests of each Christian personally in time and eternity, and the great question of a glorious resurrection of the just : a subject of whose close connection with and dependence upon the resurrection of Christ the apostle speaks in 1 Cor. 15 : 12—18. Of these all-important, but at that time altogether novel subjects, the disciples were to conceive as well as we, and to believe them. But, more than this, they were to teach, defend, prove, enforce them before high and low,—to fill the world with them, and to die in attestation of their reality and importance. Their conviction was to become in part the ground of the conviction of generations to come. The church was to be reared upon it. What depth, then, what satisfactory fulness, what unquestionable sobriety and reality, must have characterized their

conviction of all this, if *they* were to perform the task, and *we* to rest upon it with an ease and assurance sufficient to hold out in the trying hour of death ! I know that HE might have made them fit preachers of the Gospel, in all respects, in the twinkling of an eye, by a touch of creative power ; and so might he have fitted stones, and might fit them now, for the purpose ; but, just as he *now* chooses to cause divine truth to flow from the lips of him who *felt* it, and not from an unconscious machinery of wheels and springs,—just as he *now* chooses that face should speak to face, eye beam upon eye, that the living voice of man should roll on and carry thrilling conviction,—not from *stone* to heart, but from heart to heart, and light and life,—not from matter to mind, but from mind to mind, and the undying spark of divine love from bosom to bosom,—so did he *then* choose that the sensitive experience, the intellectual conviction, and the moral sensibilities of man, should be the ground upon which was to rest the great truth of a divine Saviour from sin and ruin ; so that while there remaineth yet on earth the absolutely necessary principle of civil justice and common intercourse,—I mean human experience and testimony,—while there is yet a spark of sound intellect burning under heaven, and an unbroken cord of moral sensibilities, there shall also not be wanting on earth believers in Jesus, till he shall come to judge the world in righteousness.

But, if the disciples were to attain to such conceptions, to gather such a conviction, to prepare for a work so great, opportunities were to be afforded, assistance was to be granted, stumbling-blocks to be removed from their way,—the senses touched, reason convinced, and the sensibilities of their hearts tuned and disposed. All this was done to perfection during the forty days from Christ's resurrection to his ascension, and

with an adaptation of means and a wise economy altogether worthy of him whose work the whole is.

The parts into which I shall divide this discourse will neither be exhausted nor relinquished to-day. The subsequent appearances of Christ will throw still further light upon them. Yet, that we may have some definite aim in our remarks, and be enabled to remember them the better, I propose the following arrangement :

I. WHAT IMPRESSION DID OUR LORD WISH TO LEAVE ON THE MINDS OF HIS DISCIPLES, UPON THE SUBJECT OF HIS EXISTENCE ?

II. HOW DID HE REMOVE THE MORAL HINDRANCES OF THEIR RISING TO THE NEW AND HIGH IDEA WHICH HE WAS TO COMMUNICATE TO THEM ?

III. HOW DID HE CONVINCE THEIR SENSES ?

IV. HOW THEIR UNDERSTANDING ?

I. The first impression to be made on the minds of the disciples was, that the resurrection of Christ was an entirely different one from that of the widow's son at Nain, and from that of Lazarus. Such a resurrection, such a state of existence—altogether a common, material, mortal one—would, of course, have led them to suppose that Christ would resume his office as a teacher, a Rabbi; would have confirmed them in the belief, and justly, that he intended, after all, to organize an earthly kingdom, whatever spiritual conceptions they might have strove to entertain respecting it; and would have necessarily disqualified them for the charge they were about to receive. New conversations, new discourses, reproofs and altercations in the temple, new journeys about the country, new external material cures, new merely sensitive miracles and wonders,—all this, and much more, would have been identified with his return, though miraculous, to the same



bodily existence as before; and, instead of raising their conceptions higher; instead of exercising their faith, and awakening their intellect; instead of spiritualizing and ennobling their attachment to him, and their ideas of his character, and their motives and desires at large; and instead of preparing them for the proclamation of an entirely spiritual kingdom, the coarser idea of an external theocracy would have been justified and deepened, and their dependence upon the bodily presence and the oral instructions of their Lord confirmed; while the operations, the light, the diverse, quickening, enlarging, purifying influences of the divine Spirit, and all "the powers of the world to come," would have remained unknown to them, because their value and necessity could never have been felt. This is obvious. "It is expedient for you," said Christ, a short time before his sufferings, "that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." If the dispensation of symbols and shadows, of external laws and precepts, of earthly promises and threatenings, of temporal rewards and punishments, was to give room to a spiritual dispensation, with the divine law written on men's hearts, and not upon tablets of stone; if promises and threatenings, rewards and punishments, were to become all spiritual, eternal; if the High Priest and King of the new dispensation, the dispenser of its blessings, and executor of its comminations, was to become accessible, not to the inhabitants of Judea merely, but to every sinner under heaven,—not to one generation of men, but to every generation to the end of time: then it is plain that, if, indeed, he began his career as an humble Rabbi, an inspired prophet on earth, he must, at some period, wing his way to a state of existence, to a degree of dignity and power, corresponding to his offices, and to his relation to the spiritual



and everlasting kingdom in question. His dispensation could rise only with him. If the saving principle of this dispensation was to be faith, and not works (and works can never save !),—if faith in him (and Scripture passages without number almost can be adduced to establish this) —if this faith in him was first to be grounded upon rational evidence, and ultimately upon experience, not sensitive, but spiritual,—then his material presence must have been withdrawn, his existence must have become one of omnipresence, and the evidence of unsuspecting testimony, so far as the nature of the case can admit of it, must be provided. His omnipresence is a matter of spiritual experience with every believer ; the unsuspecting testimony in question lies before us in the records of the New Testament. To prepare his disciples to bear this testimony was the chief care of our Lord, after his resurrection, as we shall see. During the remarkable day whose last scene we are now contemplating, a beginning only could be made of this ; and hence, as I have already intimated, this topic cannot be finished to-day, but will be pursued hereafter.

Let us see how our Lord began this great work. Already, in his appearance to Mary, we meet with the remarkable circumstance that she did not recognize her beloved Master, though she saw his form, and heard his voice. That she equally mistook the angels in the sepulchre for Joseph's men is not so strange, because she had, of course, never seen them before, and their appearance seems to have been simply that of a couple of young men. But Christ she knew, she sought ; and yet she did not know him till he made himself known. Considering, however, her state of mind, I should not insist upon this circumstance alone, if it did not recur time and again, and under circumstances which render it still more surprising. In the afternoon two disciples and intimate

friends of Christ go to Emmaus ; he appears to them ; he converses with them ; he astonishes them with his profound knowledge of divine things. They had already heard of Christ's resurrection ; they were in no peculiar excitement of mind ; they conceive a particular attachment to him, inviting him to abide with them ; in short, they hear him, they listen to him with attention ; they see him, they look at him with searching interest, no doubt, and all this probably for more than an hour ; and yet they do not know him, nor recognize at all either his features or his voice, until he makes himself known. Similar instances will recur hereafter. Different were the cases of the youth of Nain and of Lazarus ; everybody knew them after their resurrection, we should conclude. Again : he is no sooner recognized by the two pilgrims, when he vanishes out of sight, or, literally, " He becomes invisible." Some would make us believe that this passage merely meant he quickly retired from them, so that they saw him no more. But this is not only forcing the word *αφαντος*, invisible, but it also jars against the whole tenor of the history of Christ's resurrection. A little before, or after, the scene of Emmaus, Christ appeared to Peter ; and this apostle, in his usual ardor, immediately calls the eleven together, and communicates to them the fact. While they sit, some doubting, some wondering and rejoicing, the two pilgrims arrive, and tell their tidings of joy. Their testimony, too, receives but partial credence ; that is, some doubted still ; and, while they are yet comparing facts, and talking to each other, then, when the doors were shut (John) where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, " came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, ' Peace be unto you ! ' " How did he come ? — Some say he knocked at the door, and they opened to him ; others, and those well-disposed men, say he

opened the door by his miraculous power, for (and this is what both parties urge, and it is all they urge) it is not said he came through the locked-up doors, but simply he came while the doors were shut. What an unworthy play with serious words ! How can a man be said to come in while the doors are shut, when these doors are actually opened to him, be it by natural or supernatural power ? Can a door be called *shut* when it is *opened* ? So should we come in, the doors being shut, if there be any doors in a house ; for they are shut, and often locked, when we come. But the fact is, when a locked door is unlocked, then we pass through the door, it being open, and not shut. Why the apostle did not say he came through the locked doors, is obvious. He did not know at all which way he came. *He came*, and this is all the Evangelist knows and all he says about his coming ; but he knows, also, and he says it, too, that when Christ came the doors were shut, and not open. Moreover, the disciples “ were affrighted and terrified, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.” How was this possible, or, at least, natural, if there was not something in the *manner* of his appearing which led them into that mistake ? But what could that have been ? That Christ was risen, they knew and believed ; he was able, long before his resurrection, to open doors that were locked, and they were abundantly used to see him perform such works, on proper occasions. But his coming in when the doors were shut, this was something new, surprising to them, something which led them to think that what they saw was, at all events, not flesh and bones. Again : Christ appeared to the women,—and how did he know where they were, and walked ? How did he know the two disciples are taking a walk to Emmaus, and are going to talk “ of all these things ” ? How did he find Peter alone ?



How did he know the apostles are now assembled in their private room? Not, indeed, by an espionage most unworthy of him;—and who could have been his spy? The following impressions must, therefore, have been made on the disciples' minds, though tacitly: His existence is one of whose laws we have no conception; where he chooses to be, there he is; what we do, and think, and purpose, he knows; and the laws of matter have no power over him. And what was the most natural consequence of this impression took place,—they supposed he had no body at all, but was pure spirit. But this was not the conclusion he wished them to draw. He had promised to rise from the dead; and this meant, doubtless, that his body should rise,—for spirits are neither buried, nor do they die, nor do they rise from the dead. This is obvious. Hence it was important that they should know his body is risen, though the mode of its existence be inconceivable; and he gives them all the evidence of the great fact which the nature of the case admits of. They see him, they hear him, they touch him; the evidence of three senses is afforded. He eats before them, they can resist no longer; they believe, yea, they know and are convinced, he is in very deed risen from the dead, whatsoever of the marvellous and inconceivable may be connected with this fact.

II. Whenever objects visible are not discerned, the difficulty is not in the *objects*, but in the eye. When the thrill of sweet harmony does not ravish or the grating jar distress us, the sound was just what it was, but our ears are dull of hearing, or uncultivated. Mathematical truth is just as true as ever it was, though it may appear an impenetrable mystery to a whole country, or world. How much more, then, must divine truth be the same, and blameless, though she be unheard, unfelt forever, by you or me! The cause why so



many misapprehensions and errors prevail in this world is, that there are infinite degrees of capacity, infinitely diverse likings, preferences, prejudices, etc., in men. The things that are, are, of course, the same to all, if all could or would see and perceive alike. The various causes adduced by Bacon, which influence and misguide our mind in reference to intellectual matters, are so many and so powerful, that the view of them is perfectly appalling, and it requires a deep sense of the preciousness of truth, and a strong desire to possess it, if a man is still to engage in the seemingly hopeless pursuit. But the dire dilemma is before him,—think, meditate, or be a brute—fight or die,—and he presses on. But what hindrances, do you think, must exist in reference to things spiritual, religious, and higher than the heavens, especially to a fallen, blind, distracted worm, like man? But the still more solemn, more dread dilemma is before him,—think, meditate, seek the light of heaven, or perish, fight, or die the second death. A few only of these causes of error we can notice here as having existed in the disciples, and we shall see how Christ removed them.

They had, from infancy, imbibed a set of notions about the Messiah and his kingdom, through which, as through colored glasses, they looked upon every passage of Holy Writ, and upon every parable and sentiment which their Master uttered in their hearing. Not that he did not succeed in improving and ennobling their conceptions, in removing some of the grosser errors, and in instilling such positive truths into their minds as they were able and willing to bear. He certainly did. But their old set of notions needed to be plucked up by the roots; and this was hard, and required time and means, unless they were to be changed by omnipotence, like stones, which God never intended that they should. Christ improved,

removed, replaced their notions on the subject of his person, character and kingdom, during the three years of his sojourning with them, so far as they were willing, and almost beyond what they were willing, as those instances of reproof to Peter, Philip, and several times to all of them, evidently show. Time forbids to cite the passages which, I hope, are familiar to you all. The remainder of their system, to which they clung with a blind tenacity which yielded to no verbal instructions,—that was exploded when their Master expired on the cross, and when his lifeless corpse was deposited in the silent grave. O, now it was gone, the golden dream! It was gone! The whole stupendous framework of their longed-for theocracy was ground to dust. The spark of their own kindling was crushed,—and who would kindle it again? How long they had been feeding upon ashes, and building castles in the air! There they stood, at their wits' end; and, if heaven and earth had forsaken them, they could not have felt more desolate, empty, and deserted. A hard moral cure, but an indispensable one, too. While a vessel is full, you can put nothing into it; but when it is emptied of its contents, then it may become the receptacle of wine, or precious ointment. So they. For three years Christ had labored with them; but little was accomplished. But what they were unwilling to relinquish the merciful, omnipotent hand of God tore away from them resistlessly and forever, and that by *moral means*. Now, at last, they were as little children, ready to be filled with divine knowledge. The hard cure was rendered necessary by their stubbornness; but it was a cure still, and God was the physician.

There is not a man or woman among my readers who has not, or had not, a preconceived system of error on the subject of religion. It is impossible that it should be otherwise.

The idiot alone has none, or has it but rarely. Some of you may think that in some way or other all men will be saved; some, that all moral men (but I should like to have you draw the line, if you can!) shall escape ruin; some may have taken up a dead orthodoxy as the way of salvation; some, a dead philosophy, framed by yourselves, or made ready to your hands by others. Whatsoever it may be, depend upon it, if you have not the truth,—that is, Christ crucified, crucified for you, and living in you,—if you have not the truth, then you have “a lie in your right hand” and in your hearts; for you are sure to have some ideas and some hopes about you, concerning salvation, be they what they may. Time forbids me to impugn and expose all these errors. I can only pray that the omnipotent hand of God may tear them from you; that a blast from the Almighty may carry away, merciless, your Universalism, or your moralism, or your dead orthodoxy, or your dead philosophy, or whatsoever may be the perishing foundation of your delusive hopes, and the treacherous pillow of your alarming slumber. O, that we might see the blessed time when we could all come here poor, rid of every old, cherished error, ignorant, empty, teachable as little children! How soon would Christ step in among us, though our doors were shut tight, and our houses surrounded by a thousand spies and foes, and would say to us all, “Peace be unto you”! O, how soon! But, while you are full of your errors, whatsoever they may be, I ask, and you answer me now honestly, how can you expect to receive the truth, or be filled with all the fulness of God? It is impossible, it is inconceivable, it is hopeless, while the laws of your minds remain as they are.

2. Want of thought, retirement, reflection, and meditation before God, was another difficulty of the disciples. With the



exception of Nathaniel and John, I am not able to discover in either of them any traces of deeper *habitual* meditation, during the three years of Christ's intercourse with them. Christ, you remember, led them into the wilderness once, and probably as often as they would follow; but generally they suffered him to retire alone, and kept among the people, about their external duties. An honest and single-hearted performance of external religious duties, general serious-mindedness, openness to truth to some extent, a desire for better times and better hearts, and a very lovely and praiseworthy attachment to their dear Master, is all that I can discover throughout the four Gospels. How often did they question him privately about the most easy parables and sentiments, and ask what they meant! And Christ reproved them on these occasions several times, for their want of reflection.

Little time as I have for digressions in the present discourse, I cannot let this opportunity pass by without pointing my hearers to that thing diffused as the atmosphere, which brings a blot both upon the heart and intellect of men, and works the effectual ruin of the mass of sinners,—I mean, *thoughtlessness on divine subjects*. How many a great man has reflected on almost every imaginable subject, save religion! What a vast mass, what an ocean of mind, is there in restless motion on the stage of this present life, from generation to generation; and yet how deplorably little reflection productive of proper results do we find in this universal ferment of thought, research and pursuit! The scholar is absorbed in his scientific or literary pursuits; the statesman, the military men by land and by sea, are filled with the importance of their callings, and give their undivided mental and moral strength to them. The artist lives to the beauties of his darling muse; the manufacturer is constantly on the



stretch for improvements; the mechanic and the farmer bestow every thought they have upon the means of rising to an honorable standing among their equals, and upon the acquisition of wealth and independence. But, tell me, how many of them are in the *habit of a prayerful contemplation of eternity*, or care half as much for the knowledge of God as for skill and success in their secular avocations. They rise up, they go to eating, to work, to reading, to meals again, to rest, to diversions and walks, to evening parties, and to sleep. It is one rolling chain of worldly pursuits and indulgences, from year to year, till death comes and closes the accounts; their thoughts are anywhere but in their closets; away they go, like the fool's eyes, to the ends of the earth. O, what a low, mean, daring, alarming wallowing in the mire of this world! Lift up your countenance, immortal man! There is a God in heaven, and you are living for eternity! Lift it up, lest you perish in the pursuit of fleeting shadows! Why will you perish under the open window of heaven? But let me ask you here (for I am preaching to you, and not to the people in China), and answer me now before God, the Searcher of hearts, Where is your hour of contemplation, and when do you shut out the world from your solitary closet, to soar up to the footsteps of the judgment-seat and to the threshold of heaven, or to descend to the gates of hell, to contemplate the wages of sin, and to rouse your slumbering soul to a sense of your stupendous responsibility? Where is it, that hour, that eventful one, out of the twenty-four?

Far be it from me to charge the disciples of Christ with that kind and degree of inconsideration which I have just been reproving. No. Still, there was something like it in them, and sufficient of it, too, to throw a thick veil over the kingdom and plan of Christ. Christ removed it by driving

them to their closets, and to solitude. Since Thursday evening, they were scattered, hidden, forsaken, alone. There was time for reflection and thought; and many a thoughtful, tearful look, they may have sent up to heaven. There is a deeper tone of thought perceptible among them throughout, from the two pilgrims to John and Peter. They are stiller, more tender, more pensive, and every way more fit for the higher ideal of the kingdom of Christ. "Go ye, and do likewise!"

3. These, and many other circumstances, rendered them insensible of their need of divine light, to understand divine subjects. Thus, to the present day, "the deep things of God" necessarily remain involved, to every unconverted man, in that haze which makes them foolishness, till the light of heaven beams upon his soul. Their case and ours, in the same frame of mind, are alike. But now, their minds being prepared for the reception of a higher illumination, Christ removes the darkness from their minds, by opening "their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures," as he had done to the two disciples walking to Emmaus.

III. Upon our third topic we have already touched incidentally. After the testimony of Peter, and of Cleopas and his companion, most of them could no more doubt the fact that the Lord was risen. By the mouth of two and of three witnesses this matter was properly established, seeing the witnesses were in their right minds, and had no interest in telling a falsehood; that is, they were obviously able and willing to tell the truth. More than this no bar of justice can demand, nor does demand at present. But (for purposes which will become clear to us before closing this Meditation) Jesus had concluded to show himself to them all, *this very evening*. The *manner* of his appearing, you know. This

was, however, calculated, while it convinced them still further of the exalted nature of his existence, to throw them into doubts as to the real resurrection of his body. These new doubts were overcome by new and accumulated proofs of his real bodily resurrection from the dead; that is, of his resurrection itself, for there is no resurrection conceivable, save that of bodies. He showed unto them his hands, his feet, and his side, to convince them of two facts at a time: first, that he had flesh and bones, that he was no mere spirit; and, second, that what they saw and handled was his own body, the same one which had been crucified three days ago, and thrust through with the spear of a Roman soldier.

Joy now filled their hearts. But the idea to have him again was so great, so unexpected a one, that they could, on that very account, hardly believe even their senses. Calmly he asks for some meat, sits down and eats before them all. Now joy and conviction unite, and they gather around him to enjoy the blessed privilege of his presence.

IV. The evidence of sense, however, loses its power in proportion to the perturbation of mind and the excitement of feeling in those who are to bear witness; that is, in proportion as the witnesses to be heard were deprived of the calm use of their understanding and cool judgment, at the time when they pretended to have been witnesses of the facts to be attested. The good sense of the apostles and the other disciples led them to recognize, themselves, this principle, during the scenes of the day. Angels had appeared to the women, and Christ had appeared to some of them, and both had given them charges and messages to the disciples, and the brethren of our Lord; but still they doubted—their minds remained suspended. This they carried rather too far, and some seem to have altogether rejected the testimony



of the pious sisters, which they ought not to have done. But they erred on the safe side in this instance, and their fault was kindly reproved and forgiven. Let us now review the events of this day in reference to our present topic, that we may get a full impression of the harmony and wisdom of its plan. Everywhere the evidence of sense mingled with moral instruction, wakening thought and self-examination, and calling into exercise every faculty of mind and heart; and all this mingled in divers proportions, according to the various exigences of the respective cases.

In the morning, the slumbering hopes of the whole band of disciples, believers and inquirers, were waked by a moral shock. Women were at the sepulchre, saw angels, saw the Lord, and are bringing tidings from both. Peter and John run there, but see nothing. All this had its obvious and wise purpose. The women receive the first sensible demonstration of the Lord's resurrection,—and who would not be glad to grant that support to their distressed hearts and their comparatively feeble intellect? Still, where angels appear, a wise economy is practised, and a worthy purpose is perceptible. They have an important charge to deliver. The charge of the angels is important; yet it keeps within bounds, does not supersede what the Lord himself has to say, and the words are few, and, few as they are, they are still calculated and intended to awaken a train of useful and sacred reflection in the hearts even of the women. The appearance of Christ to Mary we have too fully contemplated already, to say much more. Only let it be remembered that the flow of her feelings was wisely checked, and thoughts of the most elevated nature were touched like the chords of a harp. All this was sufficient for the females; for they were never intended to become public witnesses of Christ's resurrection, and their



meeting him is nowhere adduced as a proof of his having risen from the dead. But the disciples, on the contrary, who, being the appointed witnesses of this great fact, were intended to be profoundly convinced, are in the mean time left to reflection and consultation; and their minds, you may easily imagine, were powerfully exercised, all the day long. How could they help comparing Scripture, and recalling our Lord's sayings? How should they not have kneeled down together and prayed for light from heaven?

But all remained still and breathless till evening. The first excitement passes away; their feelings settle towards evening rather into the apprehension that all may be the effect of imagination. True, neither Joseph of Arimathea, nor anybody else, knew where the body had been carried, and that this was passing strange could not be denied. Two men travel to Emmaus; Christ appears to them, purposely concealing himself until their minds are enlightened, their thoughts awakened, and their understanding stored with divine knowledge; then their eyes are opened, and he vanishes out of sight. As the evening sets in, another electric shock wakes the disciples, and in a few minutes they are assembled in their private room, the doors shut. The Lord hath appeared unto Peter,—Peter, the sound, fearless man! The matter is discussed. Peter assures them of the fact, and relates the circumstances. Some believe and rejoice, some doubt. It is already getting somewhat late, when somebody knocks at the door hastily. “Who is it? who is there?” “We are here,—Cleopas is here,” they whisper without. “Why, we thought you gone to Emmaus.” “No matter; open the door,—we bring good and glorious news.” To apprehend their tidings was not difficult. But those who believed Peter exclaim, as they enter, “The Lord hath risen indeed,

and hath appeared unto Peter." They sit down, and, half out of breath, tell their story. New astonishment, new discussion, new rejoicings, new doubts. The doors are shut again, of course. All at once, Christ stands in the midst of them. "Peace be unto you!" Though much surprised by the extraordinary manner of his appearing, they are now sufficiently prepared for such a scene to remain masters of themselves. The gentle rebuke of Christ, of which Mark speaks (16 : 14), makes them ashamed of their obstinate doubts; his plain appearance, his accustomed affectionate address, his calmness, remove every remainder of excitement, and they are now perfectly able to judge of what they see, and hear, and handle. They see the print of the nails, the scar made by the spear, they feel flesh and bones, they hear the accustomed voice; he eats of their food, and, when all perturbation has subsided, he gathers them around him in the way he was wont to do: and, while he expounds unto them the Scriptures, from Moses and onward, they feel themselves filled with heavenly comfort; new views burst upon them, new feelings flow from heart to heart. All is ease and peace, calmness and undying reality, about them; and a conviction, resting upon external and internal experience, is settling deeply in their minds, for which they may well have been ready to lay down their lives. Exciting reports opened the day; reflection and consultation and prayer succeeded; accumulating and more unquestionable testimony came in the evening; the evidence of sense followed; calm instruction and a retrospect upon the life and the predictions of Christ, and upon the Law and the Prophets, closed the day; and everything was shining in the substantial light of a better world, free from the refractions of the fallen reason and the corrupt heart of the natural man. If ever sober and unquestionable experience

substantiated a fact, it is the fact before us. But of all this more hereafter.

Christ prepares to take his leave for this time. One thing remained to be done. The moral distance between him and them seems so immense now, that they doubt whether they may hope to sustain to their exalted Master the intimate relation of apostles any longer. Yes, they may, they shall. "Peace be unto you," says Jesus to them again, before parting; "as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." Then breathing upon them, he saith: "Receive the Holy Spirit, the unfailing guide. Whatsoever ye do, guided by Him, is ratified in heaven. Repentance and remission of sin must be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are and shall be my witnesses of these things."

Thus ended the great day which brought life and immortality to light.

Our subject to-day is rich in practical matter, and numerous profitable remarks might now close this discourse. But our time is expired, and the application of this great subject I have reserved for some future opportunity. But, as I have been obliged to say some things seemingly or really to the discredit of the apostles, let me now do them justice, in closing, by adverting to the fulness and beauty with which, at the close of this day, their Christian characters came out of the trying furnace of fire. They exhibit an evidence of piety as perfectly conclusive as it could have been. We leave them in their poor, narrow chamber, a little, feeble flock, but full of joy and gladness. What has happened to them? what change has taken place in their situation? Have they been made rich, great, famous, formidable to their enemies? — Nothing of all this. Has their Lord brought them the promise, that henceforth they shall live in sweet retirement,

and ease, and safety, and that their late troubles were the last ones they should ever see? Nothing like it. Now, indeed, their labors and sufferings, their persecutions and wrongs, the contempt and curse of the world, were to commence. Their late distress was "but the beginning of sorrows." What, then, are they so glad about? Christ has appeared unto them. Here is the all-sufficient source of their joy, in spite of a world of enemies, and a life of toil and sufferings. When they wept, they wept for him; and when they rejoiced, they rejoiced in him. When he came, he brought them no earthly good; but he brought them his "peace," and this was enough.

O, that we, too, might shed no tears of longing, but those for him; nor rejoice, save when he draws near! Thus our sorrows and our joys would be equally proofs of our piety and sources of profit and comfort to our souls. Woe to the miserable man that weeps for dust, or finds satisfaction in carnal delight and worldly pleasures! O, that God, with whom is the residue of the spirit, might visit us, that whether we sorrow or rejoice, whether we live or die, we may have Jesus near, saying, "Peace be unto you"! Amen!



## XIII.

### THOMAS' CONVERSION.

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples, therefore, said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands ; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side : and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed : blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. — JOHN 20 : 24—29.

Now there was but one profound conviction prevailing among the disciples of Christ,—that he was alive again, with soul and body united ; that the plan of his kingdom was by no means given up ; that the mode of his existence was a high, incomprehensible one, fully answering to the spirituality and the universality of his kingdom ; and that all the events which had perplexed them so much, since his death and burial, were but so many links in the chain of a divine plan,—a plan predicted through the course of more than four thousand years, and leading, with unfailing certainty, to the salvation of a perishing world, and the consummation of all things

This conviction, as we have seen in our last Meditation, was reared upon the deep foundation of sensitive, intellectual, and moral evidence, on the testimony of Scripture, and on the enlightening influences of the Holy Spirit; and the testimony borne upon the strength of this conviction must needs possess all that the most scrupulous judge could demand, in point of demonstration, and much more.

Thomas alone was excepted from the happy number of those who rejoiced in a risen Saviour. "Clouds and darkness" remained still brooding over his mind; and while the rest enjoyed the unwavering conviction of delightful and interesting *present* realities, and the sure expectation of *things to come* which were altogether too vast and too precious fully to be realized, his mind was tossed through the space of a whole week more with the tempest of a thousand obstinate and distressing doubts. This was the deserved natural consequence of his own faulty conduct, but overruled by an all-wise Providence, for purposes of the highest interest and importance, as, I trust, the sequel of this Meditation will show.

There are many moral elements contained in the general subject of our text, upon each of which we might dwell with profit, to the exclusion of all the rest. But I must dismiss all abstract matter, and direct your whole attention to the various features of the history itself. I am somewhat embarrassed how to divide my subject,—if a division be required,—so as to pursue my main purpose with consistency and advantage. Christ must again be the centre of our Meditation; this is plain. And, still, the apostle whose name stands prominent in our text must needs engage our close attention, if we are to appreciate the conduct of our Lord; and the other apostles, also, evidently claim their share of

consideration, without which the whole can and will yield us no mature fruit, no clear perception, no deep impression.

Let us endeavor to embody the whole of what is essential to our purpose under the following two heads, namely :

I. THE MIND AND CONDUCT OF THOMAS.

II. THE PURPOSE AND CONDUCT OF OUR LORD.

I. Thomas was one of that class of men whose minds are made up slowly, though firmly; who are more liable to fall into scepticism than into superstition; who are exposed to the delusions of self-confidence, but who are sober and free from extremes, and persevering with peculiar equanimity where their conviction is properly matured. I know that diametrically opposite views have been and are taken of his character; whether with propriety, my hearers shall judge when I shall have expressed my own conviction on the subject. Unlike Peter, whose natural tendency to extremes is acknowledged on all hands, he joined the small band of disciples in a manner and with an exterior which deprived him of every kind and degree of prominence or distinction. For the space of near three years, nothing but his bare name is thought worthy of mention. Yet that he was a proper subject for admission to the number of apostles Christ himself is our warrant; and that his religious conviction was ripening, and his Christian and apostolic character developing itself, during that whole period, is clear even from what little we are told of him in the Gospels, and is confirmed by his apostolic career, transmitted to us through the medium of history.

In company with the other apostles, Thomas has often been charged with expecting a temporal reign of the Messiah,—that is, a common earthly reign, only more powerful, splendid and luxurious, more successful in battle, more destructive to its enemies, than the reigns of other monarchs. This charge

has no foundation in Holy Writ. It is on this very point that the apostles must have differed, either positively or negatively, from the epicurean Sadducees, the egoistic Pharisees, and the thoughtless multitude ; and it is on this very principle — if any principle was taken into the account — that Christ must have selected them in preference to a thousand other Jews, more learned, more skilled in thought and reflection, more eloquent, more influential, and in every respect more fit for the execution of his great plan. God despises no natural talents, no acquired abilities ; but at the heart he looks first, and nothing will make up for the settled perverseness of that.

Thomas' expectation of the Messiah's reign was a kind of heaven on earth ; a notion which you may easily infer by a too literal construction of some familiar and beautiful passages in the prophets, the spirituality of which neither Thomas nor the other apostles were prepared to appreciate. The Messiah will come, supreme, in wisdom, holiness, love and power ; the wayward heart of Israel will be changed, their sins purged ; soon the heathen nations will submit, and idolatry will be no more ; in their tender and grateful regard for the suffering people of God, the heathen will forthwith liberate and honor them, and return them to the land of their fathers, where they will dwell in perfect prosperity, harmony, and holy peace, with their king (on whose nature and character, human or divine, their notions were ever divided, floating and indistinct),— with their king enthroned at Jerusalem, and wrapt in a sacred and mysterious cloud. This idea is very much like the sentiments and expectations of some good people of the present day, particularly in England. By the same mistake they come to the same result ; and their tracts and sermons, and other works, have in this relation a high degree of interest to the church historian.



and the theologian. Only this important difference subsists between the two parties,—that, at the time of the apostles, such views were not only excusable, but almost unavoidable, which is a great deal more than I should undertake to plead for those who hold similar views at the present day. There was too little yet fulfilled to tell the apostles what degree of spirituality the kingdom of heaven would assume, and how far they should carry the solution of earthly figures of speech into heavenly realities, when reading and explaining the lively oracles of God.

But, to prepare you to appreciate fully the mind of Thomas, I must remind you of another, and, indeed, the chief mistake, which he shared with all the other followers of Christ,—a mistake to which I have already alluded on former occasions. I refer to the one under which they labored as to the manner in which the kingdom of God was to come. They knew nothing of Gethsemane, Calvary, the cross, the silent grave, the short triumph of the wicked, the path of faith, self-denial, the mortification of every earth-born desire. About the close of the third year, Thomas seems to have entertained this conviction: “Yes, *he* is the Messiah; if he is not the one, no one will ever come.” This throws light upon a passage not easily understood otherwise. About that time Lazarus became dangerously ill. His sisters send to Christ, to request his speedy visit and help. Christ delays, in order to prepare the way for that trial of faith and for that exhibition of his sovereign power which distinguished the dwelling and the sepulchre of his pious friend at Bethany, and of which Spinoza himself confessed, if he could believe it, it would overturn the whole fabric of his truly admirable system of speculation. At last, Christ prepares to go to Bethany. This undertaking was in the highest degree perilous. — “Master, the Jews of

late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?" So his disciples. To which our Lord replies in words not of a double sense (for to that our critics object), but in words of a thousand-fold sense. "Are there not twelve hours in a day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. These things he said, and after that he saith unto them: Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said the disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well." "Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent that ye may believe; nevertheless, let us go unto him." Do you understand all this? — But we return to Thomas.

He was satisfied, on the one hand, this is the Messiah; and, on the other, if he goes up to Judea, he is a dead man: and it was the utterance of his deep feelings when he turned to his fellow-disciples, and said, "Let us also go, *and die with him*;" — that is, if he goes up, he is undone; but if *he* is no more, the hope of Israel is gone, every tie of higher interest which binds us to this world is cut, and we may as well die with him. Thus this passage becomes clear, and serves to cast a deeply interesting light upon the religious state of Thomas' mind at that time. Christ, however, survived, and the hopes of our apostle were, of course, heightened and confirmed; and on the solemn entrance of Christ into Jerusalem, the hosanna of Thomas was, if not the loudest, at least as deeply felt as any other. And now, put yourselves into his frame of mind, and then go through the scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary, and be told of the burial of Christ, and you will be able in some degree to realize the utter and dreadful

disappointment which this man experienced. Away he fled from all society; everything, even pious sympathy, conversation, and social prayer, had lost their charms, and a gloomy solitude seemed the most eligible, and, to his feelings, the most consonant place in the world. Ministering spirits and Christ himself appear to the women at the sepulchre, but this has no influence with him. Obstinate he withdraws from the rest of the disciples, and returns not till late, till all the glories of the resurrection day are over. Then he returns home. He sees all countenances beaming with joy. A painful contrast to the state of his own mind. "The Lord is risen, and has appeared to the sisters, unto Peter, to Cleopas and his companion, and to us all in this very room this evening!" So they. "Indeed," he replies, smiling sadly at their credulity, "have you seen him?" "Yes, and we have seen the print of the nails in his hands and his feet, and the wound in his side. *It was him we saw.*" "Ah, you have seen him, and *merely seen*; and you may have seen a phantom. You ought to have *touched* him, and examined the matter well." "How could we dare do that?—but we all saw him, and clearly. It was him!" Whereupon, fearless of everything, save a new delusion, Thomas makes the daring reply: "Except I too shall see in his hands the print of the nails; and not that only, but put my very finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."

Poor Thomas! If Christ was morally and physically capable of deceiving *one* sense, why could he not as well deceive *all* five senses? That the veracity of Christ was to be taken into the account of the evidence did not occur to Thomas, nor did he feel the impropriety of such a shocking course of mistrust as he had proposed to himself. Thus the



tion, and remember the drift of my remarks then made, need but a word in order to recollect what was the main purpose of Christ in all his appearances to his disciples after his resurrection. It was this, namely : to prepare them for their great work by giving them a sensitive, rational and moral conviction, not only of the real resurrection of his body from the dead, but also of the exalted nature of his existence, and its perfect adaptation to the nature and extent of his kingdom. We have seen, in several successive discourses, how our Lord treated Mary Magdalene and the other women, the two disciples walking to Emmaus, and the eleven assembled together ; and how admirably he adapted his conduct to the different states of their respective minds, always aiming, with unfailing certainty and with triumphant success, at the great purpose which runs through the whole of his deep-cast plan.

Thomas is another and a bright instance of this kind. What his state of mind was, we have seen. To appear unto him *immediately* on the resurrection day, would clearly have done painful violence to his feelings. It would either have goaded him on to an absolutely unpardonable d  gree of resistance, or it would have *wrested* from him an assent without in the least convincing his *mind*. Why ? Because he was in no state of mind to *receive conviction*. Moreover, he had abundantly forfeited the privilege of seeing our Lord so soon, and a protracted season of sore distress of mind and heart was equally deserved and wholesome in his case. What a revolution took place in that man's mind during the whole course of the week I do not presume to determine. What a multitude of causes conspired to make him wretched, and to pluck the weapons of his resistance from his guilty hands ! After all, the body of Christ was nowhere to be found ; the false report of the High Priests, that it was stolen



by the disciples, was to *him* only a proof that they, with all their soldiery and seals, knew not what to make of the event, and attempted to extricate themselves by lying; many a passage of Scripture, doubtless, troubled his mind; his seasons of devotion were seasons of agony and darkness; in the social circle, and in private intercourse with the brethren, the whole mass of existing evidence, all the power of conclusive argument and of holy eloquence, were continually rolled upon his mind; the soft, melting beam of Christian affection was continually striving to dissolve the ice which chilled his heart, and the voice of prayer and intercession was continually poured forth in his hearing, that he might be led to believe and be saved. And, O! when he looked at the happy countenances which surrounded him, when he listened to the sweet converse of them all, and noticed their delightful assurance, O, what torture to his mind! Yet neither Peter's blazing zeal and eloquence, nor John's tender and winning persuasion, nor James' stern sobriety, nor Mary's tears, nor the combined efforts of the whole church then existing on earth, could break him down, or turn him from the error of his ways. Such is the perverseness of the human heart! No; they could not turn him from his scepticism; but they *could* prepare the way, gather the stones from his path, and clear away the hindrances, till HE came, against whose sovereign voice no sinner has ever stood up, nor ever will stand. This they did; and when they had done what they could do, then HE came, and did what they could not. *One* glance of his eye, *one* word from his lips, and the wayward heart was turned and humbled, and the immortal soul saved; and this whole story is nothing but a mirror, reflecting, at the same time, the glory of Christ, and the duty of the church, and the perverseness and peril of the sinner.

How kind and how wise the conduct of Christ was, in reference to Thomas, is now, I hope, clear to us all. But let us see its bearings upon the minds of the other disciples, and the whole band of believers. During this whole week they could not depart from Jerusalem, for it was the week of the Pass-over; this week was chiefly devoted to religious exercises in the temple, and at home. That the disciples met once or more a day, privately, we must necessarily suppose. But it would have been neither advisable nor safe for the disciples, if Christ had appeared often while they were at Jerusalem, and before the general meeting in Galilee. Moreover, as I have already once observed, it was in the plan of Christ to give them time for reflection, for reading the Scriptures, for the exercise of thought, the duty of devotion, and the development of faith, etc.; and what season was more admirably calculated for such purposes than this week of religious interest, and of rest from secular cares and employments? Thomas' case added to the propriety of our Lord's withdrawing for a season; but, while his case contributed to deprive them of the privilege of seeing their Master oftener, it richly compensated them by its beneficial bearings upon the further development of their views and feelings this week. A week ago this evening, a new world had been disclosed to them. They had learned *the truth as it is in Jesus*. New religious experience and new Scripture views had rushed into their minds; but as yet they were not to go abroad to make known the great mystery of which their hearts were now so full. Our Lord, therefore, chose to give them a work to do in their own family, and an important one too. A doubting, despairing brother was in the midst of them,—an unbelieving apostle! This was, indeed, not calculated to *sweeten* their meetings; but it could not fail to give them a *deep and solemn interest*.

How the presence of this sceptical, suffering brother must have quickened their recollection of the instructions of Christ, which they had recently received, and enlivened all their knowledge of divine things! How must it have exercised and put to the utmost stretch of effort their reasoning powers, when he boldly and in sweeping terms questioned the reality of their united and repeated experience! How must the bowels of their compassion have yearned over the misery and danger of one whom they could not but regard with the tenderest emotions, who had been their faithful companion in joy and woe, and who had once and again professed his readiness to die with Christ, and that sincerely, and from his heart! How must their prayers for him have been excited and quickened, their faith exercised, and every faculty of their minds and hearts taxed, to enlighten and to save him! And when all their united efforts proved vain,—and when, at last, the happy evening hour came, and Christ appeared, and melted him down, and turned and saved him with *one glance, one word*,—what indelible impressions must they have received of the vanity of all human strength, and of the transcending and irresistible power of the King of kings! And when they remembered, too, who made them to differ, what humble dependence upon Him who can give and withhold, with a sovereign right, whatsoever he will,—what an humble dependence upon him must have mingled with their new assurance, and their never-before-tasted joys! The experienced Christian will discern the serious advantages and privileges of the little flock as enhanced by the conduct of our Lord in this case; and he will recognize that eye which seeth the end from the beginning, and that unfaltering hand which holds the reins of winds and waves, and all the changes of this fluctuating world.



But we must hasten to the closing part. "My Lord and my God!"—this was the substance of the confession of Thomas' faith; to call it a mere exclamation occasioned by surprise, and not an address to Christ, is bidding defiance to the plainest laws of language, and brings the charge of profanity against Thomas. To this confession Christ replies, "Thomas, because thou hast seen, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." You observe here, again, how our Lord remains the same wherever he speaks and acts. Everywhere he addresses *the whole man*; and with the evidence of sense, where that is possible, immediately combines the exercise of the understanding and of the sensibilities of the heart. Thomas was no sooner convinced by the *sight of his eyes*, when a moral and religious lesson is addressed to him, to occupy and to exercise his mind and heart. But it is addressed to *us*, also, and it is too important and too beautiful not to claim our undivided attention, at least for some few minutes.

"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."—That we should admit things indiscriminately, and without evidence, could not be the desire of Him who labored so much to give all the evidence imaginable to his friends, both of his divine mission and of his victory over death and the grave. To apprehend the true meaning and the whole moral beauty of the sentiment in question, let us look, for a moment, upon one of the tenderest and noblest ties which bind moral and rational beings together,—here below imperfectly, but perfectly in heaven; I mean, *confidence in the character and the feelings of our neighbor*. From the bar of civil justice this principle is indeed excluded by necessity, and nothing short of *evidence* and *argument* can be admitted; though even there the supposition is that a man



will speak the truth, till something *positive* shall tempt him to deviate from it. From the market-place, and from the haunts of wickedness, selfishness and vice, drive it effectually, and to exercise it there would be folly. But, in the better relations of life, everybody feels a share of it to be due to him from his neighbor, and to his neighbor from him ; and everybody is conscious that, without it, human society would be degraded,—there would be no intercourse but for purposes of strife or traffic, and life would be a burden. What, do you think, would be the condition of a state where ruler and ruled, citizen and citizen, had lost all confidence in each other ; where every public transaction, political and social, was soured by universal mistrust and suspicion, and where, consequently, every assertion, of greater or smaller consequence, was to be accompanied by evidence and argument, or by an oath, in order to be at all credited ? Would it not be a miserable state of things ? Carry it further, and suppose that the same unhappy feeling had crept into families and among friends, and was calling forth from every house and heart the voice of alarm, as often as the nearest relation even approaches to pay his pretended friendly evening visit to its inmates. Then proceed further still, and divide the members of each family,—father and child, husband and wife, brother and sister,—and let none of them put any confidence in the character, the conscience, the sincerity and benevolence, of any of the rest, and let evidence and arguments and oaths be required daily and hourly,—and say whether hell itself could be a less eligible, a more frightful abode ! It could not, you say. Indeed not. But should you not think that this was really the case in a family or state none of whose members would believe the rest without continually seeing, hearing and handling, for himself ? *Confidence* is one of the elements of social

intercourse; and it is an ennobling one, which we should be anxious to retain, exercise and deserve, as much as possible. *How much* of evidence and argument should be required, and how much confidence reposed, in every given instance, who would pretend to decide in the abstract? Mathematics do not apply to moral subjects. *Moral feeling* must decide here, and the rectitude of him who seeks trust, and the generous fairness of him who grants it, equally affect the exercise of the moral principle in question. A thief, a liar, believes nobody, and is believed by nobody; a man who never told a lie finds credence everywhere, and trusts even to imprudence sometimes. But beautiful beyond expression is the lovely picture of a Jonathan and a David, whose mutual noble, generous and pious friendship could reconcile the most scrupulous prudence with the exercise of unbounded confidence and trust.

Let us apply these brief remarks to the case in hand. Had not Jesus foretold his resurrection, and had not unsuspicious and pious witnesses seen him? — and why mistrust the one, and charge the others with folly and superstition, or with deceit? Thomas had at the same time trampled, though unconsciously, perhaps, upon the rights of humanity and of pious fellowship, upon the claims of a faithful Master and the duty of a disciple, by not believing till he himself saw. It was his duty and privilege to believe without sight, under circumstances like his, which rendered confidence so much an exercise of sobriety and duty, and clothed it with such peculiar moral charms.

“Blessed are they,” &c. O, indeed, there is an inexpressible sweetness in that surrender of love to him, that entire confidence in the Friend of sinners, which leads us not only to require no evidence, no feelings, no peculiar extraordinary

manifestations on *his* part, but which would prefer even to believe without sight, to believe upon a single, poor, short word from his blessed lips. No; I do not want to see the heavens open, like Stephen, unless He choose to open them. No; I do not ask to see the New Jerusalem, like John, unless He think this best. *Gethsemane seen by faith* is to me the gate of heaven, and *Calvary* sparkles and shines to me, the sinner, with brighter rubies than the city not made with hands,—it shines with the rubies of his dying love. I have not seen them with these eyes; but he who died for me sent me word concerning them, and I gratefully believe. He who died for me,—can he deceive me? can he seek my harm, my ruin? If he can, then let me be ruined; then I no more wish to live; then there is for me no heaven in the wide universe, and my last tear of hopeless sorrow is my last expiring comfort! But, no, no! it is impossible that he should deceive; no, the very thought is painful and criminal. Sweet is the exercise of unbounded confidence in him; and his pale, dying countenance, the print of the nails in his hands and the wound in his side, shall be to my humble faith the all-sufficient and everlasting proofs of his sincere, tender and unfailing love to me, the sinner.

All this, and much more, was contained in the moral sentiment which our Lord addressed to the humble and believing Thomas; and what a field of contemplation, and what a new world for the exercise of the noblest affections towards the noblest object, was opened to him at once, I need not and I cannot tell you. But it is addressed to *us*, too; and, O, that no unbeliever was found in this place of worship! To be an unbeliever *now* is dreadful. The sum of evidence which lies before us at this late period is as nearly equal to sight as it well can be. And if he is blessed who hath not seen, and yet



hath believed, then, surely, he must be cursed who hath seen, and yet hath not believed.

Permit me one or two remarks more, and I have done.

In our last Meditation it gave me peculiar pleasure, after having been obliged to say much to the discredit of the ten apostles, to show, at the close, with how bright an evidence of sincere piety they came off, through divine grace, from a contest as unexpected, as fierce and trying, as theirs had been. The same privilege I am now permitted to enjoy with reference to Thomas.

“My Lord and my God!” was the confession of his faith in his Lord and Messiah, and Christ gave him the testimony that he *believed*. Whether the necessity of a *divine* Saviour, and its inseparable doctrine of the *divinity of Christ*, was quite plain to the other disciples at that time, may, perhaps, be doubted; to Thomas it was plain, if his words indicate the state of his mind. That view represented in several weighty passages of the Old Testament, and existing, as it then probably did, in some Jewish schools, was made plain to him by the exigency of his individual case, and the frame of his own mind; and a new, broad and everlasting foundation was laid by the Holy Spirit, upon which he was to rest his hope of heaven. Now he needed a *divine* Saviour; and, therefore, he sought and found him. Henceforth he was a faithful adherent to the truth as it is in Jesus, and a persevering and successful preacher of it. After the dispersion of the apostles, he preached the Gospel to the Medes, Persians, Hyrcanians, Bactrians, Ethiopians, and in India, and probably in that country sacrificed his life for the truth of what he preached. “Let us, also, go and die with him,” he had said, and so he did; and we shall doubtless find him among those who live and reign with Christ for ever and ever.



The history of the conversion of an apostle of Christ and a missionary of the cross has a peculiarly deep and solemn interest to us, beloved brethren, whom God called, and, counting us faithful, hath put into the ministry, that we should serve him in far-distant lands, in the Gospel of his Son. O, what a humbling yet cheering likeness there is between Thomas and us ! There was a time with us, too, when our hearts were filled with sorrow and sinful unbelief and doubts, and when all nature seemed to put on mourning, to bemoan our undone, forlorn condition. We had no friend on earth who could help us ; and, alas ! we thought we had none in heaven. Many around us followed still the world, but we could and would no more ; many rejoiced in the love of Christ, but we durst not yet ; we were the outcasts of heaven and earth, till the moment came, the moment never to be forgotten in heaven, when Christ manifested himself to us, as he does not unto the world, in all the beauty of his sufferings, in all the overcoming loveliness of the "man of sorrows." Perhaps he found us in the closet, perhaps in the mingled assembly of sinners and saints,—and no one knew our perishing case, or cared for us. But he knew it ; he cared for us. "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands ; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side ; and be not faithless, but believing." And, "My Lord and my God !" was all that our souls could reply. Forthwith the holy resolution was made in his strength, that, so far as we are able, his name and his praise, the story of his dying love and his saving power, should be known to the ends of the earth. And now, after much of delay and toil and peril, we are in the field, and our labors are commenced. We have followed Thomas in his unbelief ; let us follow him in his zeal, his perseverance and his faithfulness, even unto death. But our work is a work of

faith ; and our hope rests not upon the goodness of men, nor upon our wisdom, skill or power, but upon his promise and his faithfulness, which never fail. There let it rest till we shall see him as he is. The world may laugh at us as fools ; those whom we seek to save may curse us as heretics ; every external encouraging appearance may perish and pass away like smoke ; yea, the church of Christ may lose all her faith and engagedness in the great work, and draw back her hand ; the whole tide of external obstacles and difficulties may set against us ; — but the promises and presence of Christ may not fail us while we cleave to him. Mountains may be removed, and the mother may forget her sucking child ; but he will not forget us, and his word will stand forever ; and there let our confidence rest till we shall see him as he is. And O, it will be sweet and blessed to us to trust him thus. “Blessed are they which have not seen, and yet have believed !” — What a depth of meaning lies in these few words ! what spiritual enjoyment in the exercise of this elevated, heavenly sentiment ! To lean upon Jesus “even as a weaned child,” and to glorify and honor him by that trust whose exercise is denied to the happy spirits in heaven, — for there all is sight, and faith is no more, — how blessed, indeed ! With what an intensity of holy desire should we seek and crave this precious pearl !

I have done. I leave the remainder to your own meditation in the closet, where I pray the Lord who appeared unto Thomas may appear unto us to-day, and speak peace to our souls.

Finally, let me plead with you, who stand as yet afar off, doubting and halting between Christ and the world, — let me plead with you, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God through him. Yet the sands run, the sun is not yet gone down, the day of mercy lasts still, and the offers of salvation

are urged upon you. Flee from the wrath to come, perishing sinner, ere the King of kings draw nigh in his glory, to show you, not the signs of his dying love, but the frown of holy indignation, and deal out just damnation and eternal ruin upon your guilty heads ! Blessed are all they who put their trust in thee, and in a dying hour can yield up their happy spirits to thy hands, with the sincere exclamation, " My Lord and my God ! " Amen.

## XIV.

### THE EARLY MEETING AT THE SEA OF TIBERIAS.

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias; and on this wise showed he himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathaniel of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore; but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now, when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him (for he was naked), and did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship (for they were not far from the land, but as it were two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fishes. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three; and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples after that he was risen from the dead. So, when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.



He saith to him again, the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved, because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. Thus spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following: which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad amongst the brethren, that that disciple should not die; yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? — JOHN 21: 1—23.

THE scene of our Meditation now changes. All the apostles and a number of other believers have seen Christ after his resurrection, time and again, at Jerusalem. They are convinced he lives. The Paschal week is spent; the time for the meeting of the five hundred brethren draws near; they all proceed to Galilee, according to the previous arrangement made by Christ, and enforced by the angels at the sepulchre, and by our Lord himself, after rising from the dead. A large proportion of the disciples and believers *lived* in Galilee; others went there to be present at the meeting. We follow them to-day. Not, indeed, to be present at that general assembly where “more than five hundred brethren” were gathered together (for of that we shall speak in our next Meditation), but in order to witness and contemplate another occurrence,—one at least as interesting as any of those we have already gone through, one very peculiar in

many respects, and, as we think, comparatively very little understood. It is the appearance of our Lord, as recorded in the chapter a part of which I have just read in your hearing.

My hearers perceive that my text is again rather long; and yet it is so inseparably connected, that a division was impracticable. Economy of time and of words on my part, and an undivided attention on yours, will, therefore, be the indispensable conditions of a profitable Meditation upon the subject of our chapter. Nor must you fail to bear in mind what I have said on several former occasions, while I was discoursing upon the resurrection of our Lord. The main plan he had in all his appearances at Jerusalem, and which I have already unfolded to you and recapitulated, he is still pursuing; and, if you will but follow me attentively through this discourse, and one or two more to be delivered, you will see the important work completed,—you will have the key to the conduct of the apostles ever afterwards, and you will possess a sure foundation upon which you may rest with ease and comfort your faith in Christ even in your dying hour. We proceed with our subject.

We shall endeavor to appreciate,

I. THE PECULIAR CHARACTER OF THE HISTORY ITSELF.

II. ITS BEARINGS UPON THE CASE OF THE DISCIPLES IN PARTICULAR.

III. DWELL FOR A FEW MINUTES UPON WHAT IS PRACTICALLY IMPORTANT IN IT TO THE BELIEVER IN EVERY AGE.

I. The week of the Jewish Passover being ended, all that the apostles knew was, that the Lord would appear to them in Galilee. They knew that they were to expect him there, and they knew no more. This is the case with every Christian, in all his duties relative to the kingdom of heaven;

a command and a promise of blessing and ultimate success is all the Lord gives. Particulars are denied, in order to exercise, not our acumen, but our faith and obedience. The apostles and their companions had learnt so well, by this time, the lesson of simple trust and obedience, that when the solemnities of the great week at Jerusalem were over, when the mind of Thomas was turned and pacified, and every concern requiring immediate attention at Jerusalem was settled, they set out for their respective places of residence, and calmly return to their several employments. That Christ would appear to them again, and do everything necessary to accomplish the great end of his coming into the world, they were deeply convinced; so deeply, indeed, that it gave them no concern whether he would come in a week, or a month, or a year. This is exactly the frame of a true Christian's mind in every age. The Lord will come; of this grand fact he is deeply convinced,—so deeply that he cares not when or how. The fanatic may see visions, and guess and calculate from Greek and Hebrew letters, till he die; and the unconcerned sinner may slumber till he perish, and the confirmed worldling mock on till the archangel's trump stop his daring derision;—the Christian knows unwaveringly that the Lord cometh, and he will mind his duty, keep his lamp burning, and his loins girded about with truth, and his accounts ready.

Our pious travellers are safely arrived at their respective homes. After resting a few days, it happened, one evening, that Peter and Thomas, Nathaniel, John, James and two other disciples, meet together. It was at Bethsaida, on the western shores of the Sea of Tiberias, that they were thus assembled, at the house of Simon Peter, which stood near the shore. Reclining around a frugal supper, they partook of “their meal with gladness and singleness of heart;” and



when the hymn of praise was sung, they conversed long and with deep interest on the great events which had taken place during their last visit to Jerusalem, and on the still greater events and changes that were evidently close by. In his company they last went up at the holy season, but they returned alone; and what a breach had his absence made in their circle, and what a change in their situation! O, how often had he been sitting with them under this shady tree;—this tree, whose full branches, whispering peace and bending down round about, seemed to shut out the noisy world, and every wandering thought, while they gladly transmitted the silver rays of the moon, or friendly smile of some twinkling star, as if nature had learnt again her original task of being a helpmate to piety, and a guide to heaven, for her Lord, the immortal man. Here used to be his seat, unless he was induced to enter the dwelling by the many and importunate sufferers, whose infirmities and sicknesses the compassionate Saviour bore, as it were, upon his own shoulders. Indeed, where was the spot to which they could turn their eyes, without thinking of him? “Do you remember,” Peter may have remarked, “that time when he walked on yonder sea, and when I had the daring to try the same, and he saved me from a watery grave?” “Ay, you had then no faith,” some one replied, “and without his forgiving love you would have perished.” “But this was not near as merciful,” a third one exclaimed, “as when, in that stormy night, you remember, we were all out at sea, and he slept sweetly trusting in God, and when we were all full of unbelief and fear, and roused him with the outcry, ‘Lord, save us, or we perish!’ our poor shell of a boat was full of water, and could not bear a thread of canvas, and trembled to the keel at every breaking sea. Indeed, we were at our wits’ end, as the



Psalmist says. But he rose!" "Yes," another one adds, "and methinks I can see his countenance again,—how it reproved and comforted us at the same time; and then, turning to the foaming waves as a king to his slaves, he ordered peace and stillness, and was obeyed in the twinkling of an eye. We, ignorant, carnal-minded creatures, then, little knew who he was, and we were almost in more terror at the miraculous calm which followed than we had been at the gale before. But, blessed be God that his character is now unfolded to us." Meanwhile, Thomas sat with downcast countenance, wiping his eyes, till he could keep silence no more. "O, brethren, what is it to save worlds from sickness, or from drowning, when compared with the work of redeeming one soul from sin and ruin? What is it to pardon the misgivings of fallen nature in the dread hour of overwhelming peril, when compared with forgiving such unreasonable, protracted, daring stubbornness and unbelief, as mine was? Why am I not now weltering in the rolling billows of that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone?" "It is owing to his free and tender mercies," they all concluded. "Yes, brethren," John sweetly remarked, "He is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in him. But, beloved, if God so loved us, we ought to love one another."

It was now between the last quarter and new moon, you remember; the nights were darksome and still; the moon rose about morning; more favorable nights for fishing could not well be expected. Their conversation being closed, instead of going to bed, Peter proposed to go a-fishing; and the night was too inviting, and their hearts too full and too much melted into one at the moment, to permit the rest to retire. They all went together. They had all become quite partial, I presume, to that dear boat of Peter, in which the first arrows of

conviction pierced the owner's contrite heart, and from which Christ, resting upon her helm, had preached many a sermon, never to be forgotten again, to the thousands lining the shore, and covering the bold, rising ground. Into that they entered. They labored all the night, and "caught nothing." As the morning approaches, the moon rises, the east begins to glimmer, the shadows flee; the time for fishing is past, and they make for the land. All the region is yet buried in sleep and silence, save the wakeful bird that sings darkling, and the water-fowl which has begun to move swiftly, screaming, through the higher region of the atmosphere, to reach the great western sea before sunrise. As they draw nigh the shore, a person stands there; they know him not; but when they begin to be quite near, before the boat touches the sand, the stranger asks, "Children, have ye any meat?" "No," is the answer;—to which he rejoins, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." Though they knew him not, it was no great thing to try the experiment; and when they endeavor to draw the net up again, they are hardly able, for the net is full. The association of Jesus and such a draught was natural; quick as lightning it darts through John's mind, "It is the Lord;" and, pulling the net as he did next to Peter, he whispers it into his ear. You would, doubtless, not expect to see Peter a minute longer in the boat, though the fishes had been of pure gold and silver. The net escapes his hands, as it were instinctively; he slips into his upper garment, which he had thrown off, and leaps overboard to swim ashore, leaving it to the rest to get along with the heavy net as well as they could. The draught being secured, the other disciples come also on shore, dragging the net to land. By this time they all knew him; but there was something sacred and uncommonly awful in his appearance;

something strangely mysterious in the whole scene, which precluded every kind of familiarity; and though he appeared somewhat changed, and less terrestrial, if I may say so, than ever, they durst propose no question. Not far from shore there is a coal-fire with fishes roasting and bread for a breakfast, and Jesus orders some of the other fishes to be brought and roasted also: not as though the former could not suffice (you remember the five thousand and the seven thousand men fed miraculously), but rather to convince the trembling disciples that the food already prepared was also proper, material food. Then saith Christ, "Come and breakfast," and while they gather around him, he pronounces the blessing, and, assuming the office of host, he distributes the fishes and the bread.

What mortal man would undertake here to draw the line between the natural and the supernatural? They are blended together as the colors of the rainbow, and equally inseparable are the intellectual and moral elements exhibited in this narrative; and as little should I undertake to draw the line between the dignity of the divine and sovereign Lord, and the kindness of the loving and tender Master. This blending of various elements is very often observable in the life of Christ, and the present instance differs from the rest only in form and degree, but not in substance. Who kindled the fire? how did he get the bread and fishes? You might as well ask, Where did he remain during the forty days after his resurrection? How did he pass through doors locked up? How did he know what was going on among his disciples, and their thoughts, their frames of mind, and what are the laws of his existence now, etc. etc.? I frankly confess to you, I do not know. The laws of the existence of Christ in his spiritual body, and of his moving and acting, are as absolutely



unintelligible to us, as the laws upon which mind generally, or God himself, exists and acts. It is vain to speculate where we have no means of experience. It is no objection to a doctrine or a fact that it is incomprehensible to you. Surely, there is no time when you expect to know everything, unless you dream of becoming altogether and absolutely gods. Omniscience is a divine prerogative,—you can never have it, through all eternity; how much less here below, where we are of yesterday, and know nothing! Speculation finds here her impassable bounds; but there lies a world of comfort in this little story, if you have faith to lay hold of it. *Christ is the host of his people.* How often are they in distress, in poverty, in persecution, in foreign climes, on journeys by land and sea! They labor all night and catch nothing, and they prepare for a season of severe fasting and distress; and, in the mean time, Christ has decked their table, and then meets with them, to comfort them in all their troubles; and as soon as they are prepared for it he puts them into the way of getting into all plenty, they know not how. I could tell you ten examples, from mere remembrance, where the hand of Christ was everything but visible to the very eye; but our time forbids, and such facts are not for everybody. The world will profane them, and call them the effect of chance; though it is clearer than noon-day that there is not even such a thing as chance in existence,—no, not even if Atheism itself were true. O, my brethren, my fellow-pilgrims and strangers, the time may come when you will labor all night for the necessities of life and will obtain nothing; but it is only a trial of your faith. Soon the night and darkness will pass, the morning will dawn, and the voice of Jesus will be wafted down from heaven to you, saying, “Children, have ye any meat?” and while the melancholy “No” is yet on your



lips, behold, your repast is already prepared, your night turned into day, and your troubles into temporal and spiritual comfort and plenty.

The breakfast is ended. Before parting, Christ has a word of importance to speak to Peter. It is natural to suppose that Peter, who leaped overboard an hour ago to come to Christ before the rest could meet him, was also as close as possible about his beloved Master during the meal; and the experienced Christian, who knows the human heart, will not think it too much, if I say Peter probably felt somewhat tempted to outdo the rest of the disciples, not in daring now, but in love to Christ, or whatsoever it was. If I mistake not, it was some kind of emulation which tempted him, implying a comparison between himself and the rest; perhaps a comparison in reference to what is in itself most holy, just and good. This was not as it should have been. No. "Why?" you say; "shall we not each one of us endeavor to love and serve Christ better than the rest, and be emulous in holy things?" I answer, with all the emphasis I can command, No, by no means! "What! not endeavor to be the most pious of all Christians living, and to leave everybody behind us in godliness?" No, no! as you love your souls, no! Here lies the most refined, but also the most dangerous, snare of Satan. Avoid it, or you will fall; and your fall will be great. "But what shall we, then, endeavor to be?" Endeavor to be *the poorest sinners*; the golden steps of sanctification lead downward; mark it. "What! shall we plunge into sin?" God forbid! live like Enoch, if you can; yea, like Christ himself. But either do not compare yourselves with other Christians at all, or, if you do, be sure to compare yourselves with those who are better than you, and get the lowest place; and that in sincerity and in truth before God. And, if you

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cannot get it in sincerity, infer from it the deep-rooted pride of your heart, and humble yourselves into dust and ashes. Pray, what is the use of comparing one's self with others who are less? O, how miserable to see a Christian who strives to be uppermost and foremost, or who, perhaps, thinks himself neglected by his brethren, and strives to show that he is as good a Christian, and as useful a member of the church, as anybody. Is there no motive, in all the dying love of Christ, to induce you to love and serve him in secret? Will he not know it? O, yes. And is this not enough? Must the demon of emulation dress up in sheep's clothing, and impel you to the production of external fruits of righteousness, which you would never have borne had the church been willing to consider you a saint without them? O, that the humbling voice of Christ might come to you, with the confounding, heart-searching question, "*Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?*" "Wilt thou compare thyself again?" Happy if you then understand the solemn appeal as Peter did, and if your answer will be like his. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" — Peter, thoroughly converted and changed, understood and took the hint at once, and with humble cheerfulness, as every true Christian, in fact, does. In an instant he gives up every claim to superiority, contents himself with professing the simple love of Christ, and for the truth of his profession appeals to the omniscience of his Lord. This he does especially in the 17th verse, where he expressly says, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus' all-seeing eye at once discerns the sincerity of Peter's profession, but also the necessity of his remembering more distinctly and more continually his late melancholy fall. And thus he wisely connects these two forever in Peter's mind. Three times he asks, and three



times Peter must testify his attachment to his Lord, till his heart and voice almost fail; then Christ gives and confirms to him the charge, "Feed my sheep! Follow thou me."

Peter has professed much, and has appealed to high authority. But he has done it in truth, and has met with acceptance. But God has a right to try and test the most sincere profession, as well as the most spurious one. Peter's profession was ultimately to be tried by the *cross*, and our Lord makes of this circumstance another means of saving the beloved disciples from the perils of ease and self-confidence. The consciousness of that approaching trial was to accompany the apostle through life, and to keep him continually at the feet of Christ. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young," and strong, and knewest nothing better than common rectitude and rights and claims, thou didst make full use of the independence of thy mind, resist wrong, return injuries, and frown at oppression; but thy professed love to me will lead thee another and a harder way hereafter. Thou mayest no more resist evil; and the time cometh when, an old, helpless man, thou shalt suffer thyself to be bound, and led to a place where flesh and blood tremble to go. But, when that time is come, then think of my example in death, and act as I did: "Follow me." Thus saying, Christ prepares to withdraw. The words "follow me" were evidently ambiguous; and Peter, thinking our Lord might have a private word to speak to him, followed after him. John, seeing this, follows also; and Peter, anxious to be left alone with Christ, who, he thought, had something private to communicate to him, says, "Lord, but what is this man doing?" Christ replies: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me." This reply corrected Peter's mistake; for it has evidently no meaning, if *literal* tarrying

or following after Christ was intended. Its only meaning could be, "I told you you would die the same death as I did, and exhorted you to copy my example. If I have a different plan with *this* disciple, and permit him to live till *I* come to call him home, or even to judge the world, this has nothing to do with your duty to me. Follow me; this is all *you* have to do!" Peter understood the meaning of Christ now. The manner in which our Lord withdrew this time is not mentioned; the popular superstition among the brethren, that John would not die till the coming of Christ, that apostle contradicts himself; and after having testified that the facts related in his Gospel are true, and that he was an eye and ear witness of them all, he closes his work. This brings us to

II. Our second topic, which will occupy but a few minutes. It is clear that, if the five hundred brethren were to be ready for the grand assembly, they must needs receive notice that Christ had made himself visible again after their return to Galilee; otherwise they would naturally soon disperse. This object was accomplished in the present instance, together with some others of still more moment. It will appear, in my next discourse, that the chief object of the great meeting alluded to was not only to give them all an opportunity to see Christ,—for this would not have been absolutely necessary, for aught that appears,—but to introduce the apostles to the whole church then living, as their representatives and inspired teachers, whom they all were unanimously to follow. But, if this was to be done, then the conceptions of the disciples concerning Christ were to be ennobled and raised to a certain degree known to Christ only, and their conviction matured; otherwise the mountain weight of apostleship could not consistently be put upon their shoulders. Especially, Peter, who was to act at once so powerful

and prominent a part among the twelve, needed to be armed with the panoply of a thorough, ripe experience. All this, perfectly discerned by Christ, was accomplished in the present instance; and, although this important object does not appear so plain to us in reference to the other apostles, certainly in the case of Peter the indispensable necessity of such an interview, of such a finished preparation for extensive labor in the exercise of deep personal humility, before the great charge was to be committed to him in the presence of the church, is very plain even to us. Peter was now prepared to set out on his apostolic career; and so were the rest. This was another end accomplished. The notice also, probably, was now sent abroad to all believers, Be ye ready; the Lord hath appeared! This was another still. In the mean time, an impression superior to any former one was left on the minds of the disciples in reference to Christ; a spirituality, a majesty, an awe, marked this interview, which well prepared their minds ere long to see him ride up to heaven in a cloud to repossess his throne; and yet there was nevertheless beaming from his conduct all the affection he ever had for them, when he was in this world clothed in mortal flesh. Again; as in all the former instances when he appeared to his disciples, so here again, our Lord addresses himself to the external senses, to the intellect, and the moral sensibilities of his friends. No mere appeal to sense, no disproportion of what is intellectual, no morbid or overstrained exercise of the affection; but the most beautifully proportionate exercise of all the faculties of man are discerned here, producing the most satisfactory and invincible kind and degree of conviction on the subject of his real resurrection and the exalted nature of his being. But there is something peculiar connected with the story of our text, which we cannot pass by in silence.



After all, the two weeks which the disciples had lately spent in Jerusalem, and during the former of which Christ had been crucified, were a season of high excitement with them. Indeed, our Lord gave them every possible opportunity, at that time, to become and remain wakeful and sober,—to retire, to rest, to meditate, to pray, to read the Prophets, to think. His appearances there exhibit, as we saw some time since, such a wise economy, and such an adaptation to the different cases of individuals, as cannot fairly be considered the result of human penetration merely; and everywhere he labored to produce, and did produce, a conviction which rested on a deep foundation. Nevertheless, there was, perhaps, occasion on the part of the disciples to wish for another interview at this time. Now they were amid the unquestioned realities of common life, in the sober pursuits of trade and domestic employment. “If you could see him now,” some infidel would perhaps remark to them, “the thing would appear to you quite otherwise.” And behold, they saw him now. He appeared. He suffered the excitement wholly to subside; on their journey homeward he was not seen; he gave them time to recover, to return to their work; then appeared about sunrise;—not his appearance, but the draught of fishes, must convince them who he is. Nothing is there to divert, nothing to excite, nothing to frighten them. They eat, they drink, they converse, they are in a frame of mind beyond question of the most sober kind; and the hundred and fifty fishes caught and accurately numbered by them, though dumb, could afterwards still testify to the interesting reality of that heavenly morning scene.

What a sea of conviction, and of cheerful certainty and satisfaction, must have rolled into their minds! *He is risen again!*—he is risen, though the world deny it, and all hell



tremble to the bottom, and foam out mad scorn and lying blasphemy and blazing persecution. "He lives!" their hearts shouted; and they could hardly await the time when they were permitted to make the temple of Jerusalem ring again with the great, soul-inspiring news.

Thus you see the various and important objects of this appearance of our Lord. Though learned infidelity may see no worthy purpose and drift in our story, we do see it, and we cannot spare a portion of Holy Writ of which they make such hard efforts to rid themselves.

III. Several remarks belonging under this head were anticipated by us, and came in by way of digression during the course of our Meditation. For this I am not sorry. On the contrary, I rejoice, because it will give me the more time (if any time be left us) to address to you and to myself, not explanatory remarks, but a question in the name of Jesus, our risen Lord,—a question which carries along with it all the heart-searching, absorbing importance and solemnity of the judgment-day.

"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee!"

Need I say more? Is there a heart here so dull and stupid, whose most secret cord does not thrill audibly at the very hearing of this piercing, all-decisive question, or stand aghast at the reply, clothed in humble shame, yet full of sacred single-heartedness and boldness, and big with eternal consequences? But Peter is in heaven; and the question stands recorded in your Bible, hearer, not as an idle interrogatory, but to be answered by you. You did not escape the tender regard of Jesus in the administration of his sovereign mercy; he has given *you* his Word, he has propounded to *you* the great question deciding life or death; the reply of

your *heart* will not escape the all-pervading eye of his omniscience, nor your *soul* the grasp of his omnipotent hand. I testify to you to-day, that, as this divine service is not an idle round of human ceremony, but the proclamation of peace and everlasting life through Christ, so is the question now propounded to you all not an ingenious display of eloquence, but a sentiment which the divine Spirit has copied from the book of questions to be used at the judgment-day, and has hung it out of heaven for your reading, and your solemn consideration and reply, before the all-seeing eye of God. It may be an empty question to Satan, or to the damned in hell, who are forever lost; but to you, whose sands are running yet, it is real, solemn and eventful, as one of the seven mysterious thunders in heaven.

Come, now, whether you be believers or worldlings,—come, now, and gather round this burning sentence of inspiration, which the finger of God has written upon these walls to-day; for I shall not let you go out by this door again till I have pressed to the utmost of my power its solemn contents, and once more washed my hands of your blood, in the sight of God and angels and men; or, if you are a believer, not until I have poured its healing balm into your soul, and fixed your steadfast eye upon this polar star of your road to heaven.

My unconverted hearers, it is a matter of no difficulty, you yourselves being judges, to decide which dish on your table you like best; which book, which entertainment, you prefer; for whom of your acquaintances you feel any regard or attachment; or whether you do, or do not, love your father or mother, husband or wife, son or daughter, or your own life, etc. It is a matter of simple consciousness; and a little child has an answer ready to this question long before it can reply to any other. I shall therefore not permit you to plead

ignorance on this subject. To love an individual without being conscious of it, is as absurd as any contradiction in terms can ever be, and the merest refuge of lies behind which any sinner ever endeavored to hide the rebellion of his heart. You know it, if you love Christ; and if you love him not, you know it likewise.

Step forth, then; the risen Saviour is here, and asks you, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Remember that your answer must be given with an appeal to his omniscience. Look back upon your life; examine your conduct towards your Saviour, and your daily frame of mind; enter into your closet and draw your secret hours to the day-light before God; search your hearts as with a candle, weigh your motives in the balance of the sanctuary,—then open your mouth and speak, and all heaven shall listen, and the answer will be recorded above.

If from your infancy religion has appeared a gloomy task which a poor man must perform or be lost; if religious meetings and the society of godly people have appeared to you dull seasons, and the Bible a tedious book; if novels, poetry and plays, the political, literary, mercantile, witty, or epicurean periodicals of our forlorn generation have filled up your leisure hours and engrossed your minds; if you are in the habit of rising up and retiring without prayer,—a thing which no consistent Jew, Mahometan or heathen, will do; if, in your dealings with men, honor has been the noblest principle, while self-denying Christian charity has been excluded; if your secret hours have been stained with secret crimes, or with thoughtless indifference to your high and divine destination and to the all-pervading presence of God,—void of contemplation and better thoughts, void of devotion, void of interest, void of spiritual profit; if your grand motive



and spring of action has been to get along in the world, as they say, to obtain a situation, to become independent; in one word, to get, to possess, to enjoy, to become something aside from the glory of God, and the love and the kingdom of Christ,—no matter whether that something was in itself lawful or unlawful, great or small; above all things, if Christ and his cross have been to you without form and comeliness, if they never melted your heart, nor lifted your soul above the follies and the mole-hill concerns of this trifling world, nor filled you with holy admiration or with holy resolution, with heavenly love and heavenly energy to follow Christ, and to do his will: then, O, then, hesitate not to confess (for you cannot hide it), and say, *Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee* NOT. Then hesitate not to admit (for you had better know it in season, if peradventure you may be struck with holy terror and turn to Christ and live), then hesitate not to admit, at once, that to you the divine sentiment before us is a dreadful “Mene, mene, tekem, upharsin,” that is, “God has remembered thy kingdom and finished it.” Thy fleeting privileges, thy moments of mercy, hasten to their melancholy catastrophe: “thou art weighed in the balance (of heaven) and found wanting;” thy kingdom, thy inheritance in heaven, vainly purchased for thee and vainly offered, is torn from thee, and given to some poor, despised heathen in the islands of the sea, or in yonder China or India, or to some perishing slave in the New World. Ah! it is a melancholy thing to look about among my hearers, and to ask whose case is now described. Who will be thrust out of heaven as an enemy of Christ? Methinks I can spare none of you; and blessed be the Lord that I can yet stand between you and ruin, and plead with you the cause of your immortal soul! Alas! in the evil days into which our lot has fallen, we



are confined with this privilege almost entirely to the sacred desk, and to the fleeting hour of preaching. In common conversation you will give us no chance. Let me, then, improve this moment, and plead with you, as I have often done before, by all that is dear to you,—love not the world and its toys; but love and follow Christ! Let me throw the whole weight of eternity, of heaven and hell, into the scale of your decision, and settle it forever that you will love and follow Christ, and serve and glorify him! Your spiritual grave is open; angels have rolled the rock away; the folding-doors of heaven's gate are thrown back; the Gospel-trumpet rings in your ears. Listen, I do beseech you, listen to it while it does sound! Soon it will stop forever, to give room to the thunder of the Archangel's voice. Then it will be forever too late; and I shall bear witness against you, that you have heard the sound of the Gospel-trumpet, and took no warning; and the sword came and took you away, and that your blood is upon your own head. O, that the Lord might deliver me from that task, and convert and save you all!

To those who know Christ, and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, the heart-searching question of Christ is addressed for their self-examination, and for their humiliation, no doubt; but also for their comfort. You will not expect me to describe to you the peace and blessedness of Peter, when the great profession was made, his conscience bearing him witness in the Holy Ghost that he spoke the truth in Christ and did not lie. And, though the remembrance of his fall and of a misspent life humbled him deeply, yet the sense of Jesus' love kept him from sinking, and assured him that his sins were all forgiven, and that the work of divine grace was in his heart. The great evidence of a new state of mind was there; and, though he was the least

among the saints, he professed Christ, and Christ was all he wanted.

My brethren and sisters, let us remember this, and not seek again the evidence of our conversion in the imperfect fruits of righteousness we bear. Since Jesus has left this world, and is gone up to heaven whence he came, perfection has ceased to dwell on earth. Let the touchstone of our hopes be *the love of Christ*. If we can look about over all creation, and then, appealing to his omniscience, say, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee," and that I love thee more than all these things; more than I do father and mother, brother or sister, husband or wife, son or daughter, yea, more than my own life also; though that love may still be, as indeed it must, infinitely below our debt of gratitude, infinitely below his merits, his loveliness, and his love to us; though the fruits of our faith and love may be, as indeed they ever must be, infinitely below our obligations to him, and infinitely below his blessed, perfect example,—be not disheartened! You still love him more than all besides; and do you think that he loves you less? Sooner will he blot out the stars than quench the little glimmering spark of divine love in your hearts, or leave you to perish. Forget all your own works, all your sins and imperfections, and all your gifts and graces, too, and love him with your whole heart, though it be but small and contracted yet. He will also love you with *his* whole heart, and his heart is a rolling ocean of love, a burning fire of undying affection. Do you think he will reckon with you about your little works? Love does not reckon. Or does he need them? If he were hungry or thirsty, he would not tell you; Lebanon is too small for an offering, and the beasts thereof too few for a burnt-offering; and the cattle upon a thousand hills are his. It is your *heart* he wants;

if that be his, and wholly his, he is satisfied ; he will adorn it for himself without your knowing it. While you tune your plaintive song, "Look not upon me, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me : my mother's children were angry with me ; they made me a keeper of the vineyards ; but mine own vineyard have I not kept. Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon : for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions ?" he will answer, and say, "How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse ! how much better is thy love than wine ! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices !" "Thou hast loved much ; therefore much is forgiven thee." "Follow thou me," and be forever mine ! And ere you are aware of it, or think of it, or dare to hope it, or dare to believe it yourself, he will make your light shine before men, that they, not you, may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Like the sun you will warm and quicken all around you, though like him unconsciously, perhaps ; like the stars you will shine, but not unto yourself.

"Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south ; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits !" Amen.

## XV.

### THE MEETING OF THE FIVE HUNDRED BRETHREN

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe : in my name shall they cast out devils ; they shall speak with new tongues ; they shall take up serpents ; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them : they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once ; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. — MARK 16 : 15—18. 1 CORINTHIANS 15 : 6. MATT. 28 : 16—20.

IN selecting my text for my present discourse, I assume that Matthew and Mark, in the passages which I read first, and Paul in the one which followed, refer to one and the same event. As I do not enjoy, in this view of the subject, the assent of some of the latest critics, I feel an obligation briefly and candidly to mention the reasons which have led me to the conclusion to which I have come, relative to the identity of the event in the three passages of Scripture.

1. The *meeting in Galilee* was the all-absorbing subject of expectation after Christ's resurrection. The angels at the sepulchre remind the women of it, and send word to the disciples and to Peter that it would certainly take place. Christ himself had given to his disciples a special promise of that meeting *before* his death ; and by Mary, whom he met at the



sepulchre *after rising from the dead*, he reminded his *brethren* of proceeding to Galilee. All these preparations answer well to the meeting of the five hundred, which was no less than the assembly of the whole church then living. In the above errands of the angels and of Christ, the term “disciples” is not necessarily restricted to the *eleven*; other believers were sometimes called so, and the expression “brethren,” which Mark uses in its place, clearly points to a broader acceptance of the term “disciples.” The twelve disciples of Christ were never called his *brethren* exclusive of other believers.

2. What Christ says at the meeting itself concerns the *whole church*, and cannot be limited to the *eleven*. *They* could neither baptize *all the nations*, nor preach the Gospel to *every creature*, nor enjoy on earth the presence of Christ to *the end of time*. But the church can and will do and enjoy all this.

3. Some, upon seeing Christ upon that occasion, doubted whether it was he, or not; this could not be expected of the eleven disciples, who had already seen Christ time and again, but must be supposed to refer to some other believers, who had never before seen Christ in his glorified and elevated condition; other believers must, therefore, have been present, — and why not all the five hundred?

4. A meeting like that of the whole church would naturally be mentioned by the Evangelists; but, if it is not contained in the portions of Scripture which I interpret as alluding to it, I ask, where is it contained? To the objection that neither Matthew nor Mark mentions the *number* of believers present to have been so great, I reply, these two Evangelists are evidently exceedingly brief towards the close of their accounts; they only mention what is altogether essential for *their* purpose, and dismiss the rest, or assume it

as well known. Nevertheless, the mention of a *mountain* in Galilee already leads to the idea of a *large congregation*, one not to be assembled within walls, as the eleven at Jerusalem used to be; and the recollection of the reader at the period when the Gospels were written would then easily supply what the necessity of conciseness did not permit the Evangelists to insert.

While we implore the assistance of Him who alone can guide us into all truth, we proceed to the contemplation of the solemn and interesting event before us. It is the only instance in the history of our globe when the whole church of Christ was assembled *in one place, with Christ himself* visible and audible in the midst of them. Till the eternal separation of the chaff from the wheat, of the good seed from the tares,—till the consummation of all things,—such a meeting will take place no more.

Unwilling to lose any prominent part of my text, I must again beg the indulgence of my audience, if the *arrangement* of the discourse exhibits nothing like a logical concatenation of thought. The *substance* of it shall not be destitute of reason and argument. The fact is, that I want to occupy the whole ground as far as my time will permit. If I were to cut up this Meditation into propositions, I should want to stretch their terms beyond the power of language. But, I feel as though we should all be most profited by accompanying, with one accord, *the little flock on their way to the solitary and interesting meeting*, and then, sitting down with them, listen with solemn attention to the weighty and gracious words of Christ himself. Let us, then, arise, my friends, and go up to the mount,—up where every better emotion brightens; where the pulse of spiritual life beats higher, and where the bosom swells and heaves as though it was now

to drink at once of the river of the water of life freely. O, that none of you might now remain below at the foot of the mountain, to hear and see nothing but the thunderings and the lightnings of divine justice provoked, and the shaking of nature before Him to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth !

I. Our pilgrimage to the mount of vision is our first united task. But whither ? — Into a mountain in Galilee, according to Matthew 26 : 32 ; 23 : 7, 10, 16, and other passages. But into which mountain ? — Scripture is silent on the subject : an ancient tradition, according to some writers, points us to *Tabor*. It was on this mountain, according to the testimony of antiquity, that Christ was transfigured ; he knew it as a convenient and safe place of retirement. There is no evidence that the eminence of Tabor was inhabited *at that time*. In times of war it became repeatedly a place of refuge, or a military post ; but the entire absence of water, save rain-water, and the difficulty of access to the summit, would naturally soon lead to its abandonment again. It is a solitary place now, and has been so for many centuries. The topographical position of Tabor was exceedingly favorable for the purpose of our text. Its distance from the Sea of Tiberias is but eight or nine miles ; equally far was Nazareth from it. Magdala, the city of Mary Magdalene, was at the same distance. Even Samaria on the south-west, and Capernaum on the north-east, were but twenty miles off. It was on the west side of the Lake of Tiberias that Christ had already appeared, as we saw in our last discourse ; and thereabout his followers must have been gathered, in expectation of the meeting. The peculiar nature of the mountain itself was, perhaps, more favorable than that of any other in Galilee. Tabor is a solitary cone north-east of the plain of Esdraelon, from four



to five hundred fathoms high, with a platform on the top, of near half an hour's walk in circumference. The sides of the mountain, composed of limestone, were, and still are, covered with a forest of oaks. In less than an hour its summit can be reached; but, the latter half of the journey being difficult and uncomfortable, the top of Tabor has always been a solitary place. In the morning the summit of the mountain is covered with a cloud, which, towards noon, passes away before a fresh breeze, by which the height is sometimes rendered unpleasant that part of the day. As the cloudy covering is rarefied, a prospect opens well calculated to expand the bosom of man, and prepare the most trembling heart for the conception of great resolutions and vast hopes. On the south, successive valleys and hills run down as far as the grand rock of Jerusalem. On the east, proud Jordan meanders with royal ease along the fertile valley, and the Lake of Tiberias reflects the canopy of heaven with its passing clouds. Still further east, the valleys of Hauran lie spread out; and on the north tower the Hasbeian and Casmian Mountains, with the majestic Lebanon behind them. And, finally, on the west, the fruitful plains of Galilee shade away into a delicate picture; the Mediterranean Sea borders the landscape. And how well our Lord knew to make nature tributary to his holy purposes I need not prove; and why should he not have done so here? I need only add, that the season of the year, as well as a multitude of other circumstances, arising from the nature of the spot just described, and, indeed, of the meeting itself, oblige us to suppose that the journey was performed during the latter part of the night, and that the rising sun found them all assembled, and Christ in the midst of them.

But let us anticipate nothing. We are in Galilee still.



Mysteriously surrounded by him whom we used to see in mortal flesh, we are awaiting, among the rest of his disciples, the coming of that interesting moment when the long-promised meeting on yonder solitary mountain shall be announced. All necessary preparations are made; all minds calmed, settled, solemnized,—every carnal expectation hushed, every doubt dispelled; the time is come. The notice is given in the evening, and flies from heart to heart, from house to house, on the wings of sacred joy. Angels appear to be the bearers of the holy errand; for it moves with the swiftness and the unfailing certainty of lightning. The midnight breeze wafts the glad tidings to the dwelling-place of every distant believer, not one excepted. But upon the enemies a deep sleep has fallen from the Lord, and not one of them apprehends the approach of the great hour. They all slumber unconscious: no mocker annoys the harmless pilgrims; no cursing or trifling wretch disturbs their pious conversations and the psalms they sing by the way; no foe obstructs their path; no spy is hid on the mountain-top, to mark them for prison and slaughter.

Like scenes are acting over in our times; and they have, in fact, always occurred, since the meeting in Galilee. How often does it happen that God puts it into the hearts of some despised Galileans or Nazarenes to get together in an early meeting before sunrise, to meet the Lord, to pray together to him, to meditate upon his word, and to receive his commandments! Thoughtless men either know nothing at all about it, or they smile at the superstitious notions of these singular people. It is a matter of no consequence to them; the rearing of a house, the purchase of a fashionable toy, the lying tales of the day, and every other like folly, receive incomparably more of their attention than such a super-

stitious prayer-meeting. And then, commercial news, literary publications, political phenomena,—who would ever be so ridiculous as to degrade them to a comparison with the despicable season of an early social devotion, to which none of the “wise men after the flesh,” none of “the mighty,” none of “the noble” are called? But, sooner or later, the consequences of such a despised prayer-meeting are felt; and many a sleeper who mocked or cursed them in his heart, while stretched on his couch, can all the night through get neither sleep to his eyes nor slumber to his eyelids; for the Holy Spirit has descended, and conviction has fastened upon him, resistlessly, till he cries for mercy and submits. And in another house or palace you find, perhaps, the unreclaimed rebel sealed to destruction. Ahab or Julian stretched on his bier, or Saul struck with madness, or Herod writhing under the gnawing of the undying worm, or Voltaire or Francis Newport breathing out with their last curse their despairing souls, doomed to hell fire. Two or three praying Christians assembled can open the gate of heaven, and bring down the Holy Spirit; and where he comes there are “voices, and thunderings and lightnings, and an earthquake;” there is judgment held, eternal destinies are settled, eternal interests gained or lost, and souls sealed for heaven, and put forever beyond the subtlety and power of earth and hell, or sealed for destruction and given up to reprobation and damnation irrecoverable, “hopeless as the decisions of eternity and the reversion of doom.” And you may believe this or not; this does not change the case; eternity will reveal it ere long. Look at the Christian institutions of the day. May God keep us humble and contrite while we ask, Are not Bible, Missionary, Tract, Temperance, and many other Societies on either continent, the fruits, the consequences, of such meet-

ings? Do they not now, as it were, live by them? Reasoning from what they have done, tell me whether they will not ultimately change the moral aspect of this entire world, and whether kings, or wise or mighty men, will be able to resist them! Be careful, and despise not a couple of ignorant, praying Christians, nor dare to slumber while they pray! They are handling the undying spark from the altar in heaven; if they cast it into the mine, there is no telling where the resistless explosion will stop.

But we lose sight of our travellers. It is again about full moon, and the nights are cool and delightful. During the night our pilgrims started; and, as the morning dawns, they ascend in small companies on every side of the mountain. There were the eleven disciples, all the believing relatives of our Lord, Lazarus and his sisters, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, a number of converted Samaritans, Roman officers, Greek proselytes, and many from the various surrounding countries, whom Christ had healed, and who believed on him.

As they mount up beyond the inhabited base of the mountain, the region becomes more and more still and devotional. All nature seems to rest in contemplation, and to be preparing to meet the rising sun, her king, adorned with the jewelry of a rich, refreshing dew. By and by, the lively quail begins, in the deep clefts of the high lime-rock, to call her little neighbors to devotion and labor. A solitary lark or two are already warbling in the air hovering about the mountain-top. The wakeful birds here and there prepare their voices for the morning hymn, and the stork on the inaccessible peak bestirs herself to guide the concert. There is much of sacred beauty in simple nature, and happy the man who can walk abroad alone and open his heart wide, that God may



fill it with all the wonder, delight and praise, for which his perfect and mighty works call so mightily. Our pilgrims arrive on the summit, issuing, about sunrise, from different points of the forest. Could I but describe to you now their meeting, their salutations, their joy, their love! But I cannot. No doubt many were delightfully surprised, too, to see a friend, a brother, a sister, an aged father, a decrepid mother, unexpectedly in the pious circle. "Why! are *you* here, also? I thought you were a mortal enemy to our heavenly Lord, and to all his people. What brought you here, I pray?" A mute embrace, a blush, a trickling tear, were the answer. But what surprised all of them most was, no doubt, the large number that came together. But a few weeks after our Lord's ignominious death, after a few appearances, before the Pentecost-day even, "more than five hundred brethren"! O, the power of divine grace! O, the resistless charms of the cross! There are some here who know what such a meeting means. It is a foretaste of heaven, and cannot be described.

They are assembled, they are gathered close together, they are yet pressing each other's hands, when the Lord appears! This was the interesting moment,—the meridian height of the scene. An awful silence ensued. Love and reverence bow them to the dust; they surround him, some kneeling, some lying on their faces, some looking up to him with mingled rapture and self-abasement. It is a scene of holy and overwhelming interest. They know not what they are doing. But there was so much of the heavenly, of the angelic and the divine, in his appearance, that they experience something of that prostration of nature which always attended the special divine presence through the Old and New Testaments. "And when they saw him," says Matthew, "they worshipped



him" prostrate, "but some doubted." And here it is where another interesting portion of Holy Writ gives and receives light and significancy, as we shall briefly show.

The Evangelists (Matthew 17, Mark 9 and Luke 9) state that during the second year of our Lord's ministry he once took with him Peter, John and James, up into a high mountain. There Moses and Elijah appeared; our Lord's whole aspect was changed and glorified; a voice from heaven was heard declaring him the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. The disciples were prostrated and overcome by the scene till it was over,—till Moses and Elijah disappeared again, and Christ resumed his usual appearance, and spake to them in the same kind and familiar manner as before. On descending from the mountain, "he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of Man were risen from the dead." Why they should tell it then, was dark to them. \* They, of course, obeyed, and kept the facts in their minds, as a mysterious thing, to which futurity was to give them the key. This key was given to them in the occurrence of the morning of which we now speak. The appearance of Christ was so heavenly as to prostrate the whole assembly. Trembling nature testified that God was present. But was *this God Jesus of Nazareth*? Was the personage they saw their beloved Master? They had never seen him thus, not even after his resurrection; perhaps not even the eleven had seen him *thus*. No wonder that some of the assembly doubted. And thus the moment had come when Peter, James and John, could arise and testify, "Yes, brethren, *it is He you see*. We have seen him so before. A year and a half ago, and on this very spot (for it was probably the same) we saw him so, and his appearance was no less superior, no less awful, then, than it is now, nor

was our amazement and terror less great than yours is at this moment. Let us, therefore, dismiss every other thought, and listen to what our Lord has to say." "Lord, speak, for thy servants hear," was the universal voice; and this brings us to the second part of our Meditation.

II. Having already consumed so much time in the first part of my discourse, I am compelled to study brevity, though there is a world of matter before me now.

There is a seeming contradiction in the story of our text, which we must first remove. In introducing us to this scene, Matthew mentions the eleven alone, and Mark refers to them, and to them only. The words of Christ, on the other hand, are evidently not to be limited to them. Those in which miraculous powers are promised were common to many other believers in the apostolic age, and are confined only to a certain period, but not to certain persons; and those words which contain the command of preaching the Gospel to the entire world, and the promise of his presence to the end of time, evidently point to the *church of Christ in every age*. The solution is, that the eleven are thus particularly mentioned, because they were prominently, though not exclusively, addressed. By doing this, Christ established or confirmed their apostolic character before all the assembly, and settled forever who were to be the ultimate authority in the church. This circumstance accounts at once for the fact, that none of the converted relatives of Christ, none of the converted Priests or Pharisees, none of those believers even who themselves wrought miracles, ever so much as attempted to become the infallible leaders of the church, or to vie with the eleven in authority; but willingly and faithfully followed their directions, whatsoever they were.

But let us hear what he says. The assertion of his own

character, the great duty and the great privilege of the church,—this is the three-fold point of view under which his weighty address will best be ranked.

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” All depends here upon the question, What is the meaning of “heaven and earth,” in the language of Scripture? We are, doubtless, not to give it a meaning foreign to Scripture usage, unless we mean to handle the word of God deceitfully. A few passages will put this subject beyond every candid or reasonable doubt.

It means the visible creation, without any limitation whatsoever. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” (Genesis 1: 1.) Here heaven and earth are the universe most plainly; heaven includes the stars, &c.,—all the systems of heavenly bodies visible to us; — “Let there be stars in the firmament of heaven.” (Genesis 1: 14.) “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the hosts of them.” (Genesis 2: 1.) “The most high God, possessor of heaven and earth.” (Genesis 14: 19, 22.) “Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” (Matthew 5: 18.) “The Lord (Jehovah) who made heaven and earth.” (Psalms 115, 121, 124, 134, 146. Isaiah 37. Jeremiah 32. Acts 4, and in other places.) The same sense it has in a multitude of passages, as every child knows. Again, it means the habitations of the moral and intelligent beings in this and in the spiritual world. “He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven (angels and saints), and among the inhabitants of earth.” (Daniel 4: 15.) “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for Jehovah speaketh.” (Isaiah 1: 2.) Here the universe is addressed, but with special regard to the intelligent inhabitants of either world. “Let heaven and



earth praise him." (Psalms 69 : 34.) Heaven is the spiritual world conceived of under the category of place. "He (God) will hear from his holy heaven" (Psalms 20 : 6); that is, from the world of spirits, where he eminently dwells, being a Spirit. "Heaven is my throne, and earth my footstool." (Isaiah 66 : 1.) "Do I not fill heaven and earth? says Jehovah." (Jeremiah 23 : 24.) Angels always come down from heaven; the universality of Jehovah's reign is, therefore, expressed thus: "Thou art God of all kingdoms, thou hast made heaven and earth." (2 Kings 19 : 15. 2 Chronicles 2 : 12. Nehemiah 9 : 6); and his supreme greatness, too high to be reached by finite beings,— "He is high as heaven; what canst thou do?" But I must desist. Passages of this kind are too many, and too familiar, to make it necessary to cite more. To say that heaven means the church, and earth the wicked world; or, that heaven is the church in the other world, and earth the church in this, and the like pitiful contrivances to escape the influence of an unwelcome truth, is a forlorn endeavor. An unqualified denial is all I have for them. No! this is my only argument, until I see more than great swelling words, and wholesale assertions without proof.

"All power," etc. etc. — Do you know now what this means? Do you make it less than omnipotence? If so, let us see your proofs; and if, from Genesis to Revelation, you find a passage fit for your purpose, you are the first who ever found it, and I give up my argument at once. Omnipotence, then, is its import. But that omnipotence is an absolutely divine attribute, and that one divine attribute cannot exist in a being without all the others, and that the being who possesses them is God; — to deduce and prove all this, falls into the department of philosophy, and can be carried



through triumphantly. But I waive this here, because it does not enter necessarily into my purpose.

You remember what I said respecting the exalted appearance of Christ; and now, how these mighty words will correspond with it, is too plain to escape your notice; but what follows corresponds no less with it. An assertion of extensive import he has made respecting himself; a commission of immense extent follows. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Salvation or ruin shall be the unavoidable alternative attending your administration. Baptize them, and teach them to observe all which I commanded you. Convert the whole world! Truly a commission which needed to be supported by the omnipotence of Him who gave it. To any other one than an omnipotent Being, reasonable men would have answered, and rightly, Are you beside yourself, or do you think that we are so, to give us such an absurd charge as this? Who will go over the world and change the hearts of selfish men to the love and performance of precepts as spiritual and self-denying as those which we are to teach them? Has ever a sober, thinking man, has ever any philosopher, thought of such a thing? Yea, has ever any dreaming theorist been extravagant enough to think of it? Has Pythagoras, Socrates, or Plato, or Confucius, been bold enough to think of a scheme like this? You say they were not enlarged enough for the conception; they were uncommissioned of Heaven. Be it so. Has ever Moses thought or talked of such a work? — Never. The prophets, indeed, speak, and with transcending beauty, to be sure, of a golden age of the world; but they merely speak of it as coming, and none of them has ever entertained the extravagant notion of carrying it into execution, and that by a handful of ignorant and despised men, as we are. Never!

never !— we shall not, we cannot, comply. Thus they might have said, had the charge come from a mere man. But this is not the case. The charge came from one who takes no refusal; and who can, and does, give with the command the ability to perform, though it be to create worlds. “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth;” “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.” Ah, to be sure, this harmonizes well; and the retrospect of eighteen hundred years, and especially the short but rich and wonderful history of evangelical Missions — (may God take all the glory to himself!) — these are commentaries upon the texts quoted, which outstrip the boldest flight of fancy.

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.” — You see the extent and beauty of the commission. It is a soul-stirring conception, broad as the universe, deep as the fathomless ocean, delightful as the untarnished bow of mercy in the summer cloud. Tell me no more of the gigantic greatness of ancient times and generations. I know they were gigantic, while the self-conceited vulgar of these days “of small things” have dwindled into dwarfs. I know there is no Alexander, no Sesostris, among your monarchs; and their cabinets are chess-boards, where shrewdness, not *wisdom*, is displayed. The time of heaven-inspired poets is gone by, and our philosophers are full of themselves, and void of God and divine things. I, too, have read of the Babylonian edifice, whose remains have outlived four thousand years; I have heard of the Rhodian image, the Ephesian temple, the city of hundred gates, the Catacombs and Pyramids, and the excavated mountains of India. These efforts betray vast conceptions, no doubt, and the men who made them knew how to calculate on a bold scale, and then to set about their work with an earnestness that deserves

high credit while the earth shall stand. It is, indeed, grand to think what notions the head of man can give birth to, and what his hands can mould, frame, or rear. But his mastery over brute force or mechanical power is, after all, but a fraction of his native excellency, and inferior in kind. And the pride of tyranny, which prompted all the great efforts of antiquity, and the filth of immorality and the superstition which cling to their productions of art, and to their nervous writings, are matters of deep sorrow to the lover of mankind, and forbid his desire to roll back gone-by centuries; and, blessed be God, he need not roll them back! Why should he? Do you desire to be engaged in a great work?—Here is the greatest work the world ever saw,—the illumination and salvation of a world! Do you want vastness?—Here it is. It could not be vaster. Do you want intellectuality?—Here it is. It could not be more intellectual. Do you want usefulness?—Here is usefulness in its perfection. Do you want what the admired works of antiquity lack—simplicity, philanthropy, moral beauty, heavenly temper, god-like fruits to others, and the noblest conceivable self-reward; that is, reward undeserved and unsought, most freely bestowed, yet surer than the rising of the sun, most honorable both to the giver and to the receiver?—Here, here they are, all bound up indissolubly in the great commission which Christ gave to his little flock, on the solitary mountain in Galilee, when he said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth;” “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.” But, my friends, this is a suitable place for you to stop, and to ask yourselves, one by one, here, What am I engaged in? Am I engaged in this great work? I need not be a minister, or missionary, for that. Do I possess the kingdom of God in myself, and do I promote it in



the world as I walk along in the path of my duty? Perhaps you say, "I am but an insignificant individual,—what can I alone do?" Who wants you to do something *alone*? I, too, am but small; but, if I must be a drop, I will be a drop in the ocean of God's universal kingdom, and not in the filthy puddle of this world. O, my friends, what are you about? Your souls are indeed drops fallen from the clouds of heaven; shall they die in the stagnant pool of selfishness and moral pollution, or in uninterested sloth and thoughtlessness? or shall they swell the tide of Ezekiel's river, rolling over this world with healing power? Ah! think,—make up your mind,—life and death are before you, and life and death only. A third choice you have not. It is no pleasure to perish in company.

But we hasten to the close. The great privilege of the church is the legacy of the continual presence of her Almighty Lord and Head. The first part of Christ's promises, awarding to some the gift of miracles, is best commented upon by the Acts of the Apostles and the authentic history of the church. It related to those to whom afterwards that talent was committed, and to none else. Its purpose was to put the seal of heaven upon the doctrines of the Gospel; that seal was put on, and the testimony of sacred and profane history on the subject furnishes us with materials for a rational conclusion equally good and imperious with the evidence of our own senses. Every sober, well-trained reasoner knows this. But the second part of the promise, being of equal extent with the command just noticed, has the same immediate practical interest to every true believer under heaven, till the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father.

"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the



world." I am fully aware, and I willingly grant, that there is a mental presence in some place remote from us, which may be predicted of any man. Says Paul to the Corinthians, "For I verily, as absent in the body, but present in spirit, have judged already as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed." This is a presence in imagination most clearly, the apostle imagining himself in the midst of the church of Corinth to excommunicate a young man who was guilty of gross misconduct. So he says to the Colossians (2: 5), "For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ." Nobody has ever inferred from these passages that Paul was omnipresent; for they are given in such a connection as to prevent every mistake, and to show that they are to be taken in the same sense in which we say, Distance does not separate true friends; we are daily among our beloved in lands remote, &c. Another presence is the prophetic one in a vision. When Gehazi ran after Naaman, whom Elisha had healed from leprosy without taking any reward of him, and when he took money and raiment from the Syrian, and hid it, and then came before his master, prepared to play the hypocrite and the liar, his master said to him, "Went not mine heart with thee when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is this a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and olive-yards and vineyards, and sheep and oxen, and men-servants and maid-servants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee and unto thy seed forever." This was a presence in the prophetic vision, and nobody ever fell into the mistake of supposing Elisha present everywhere on earth, and at all times, till the world shall end.

A widely different impression is made by those passages of

the kind when Jehovah is the subject. Exodus 3 : 12, Jehovah says to Moses, "Certainly I will be with thee;" that is, in the whole work of Israel's deliverance from the Egyptian bondage. Deuteronomy 31 : 6, 8, Moses says to Joshua, "Be strong and of good courage. Fear not, nor be afraid of them. For Jehovah thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee nor forsake thee." Joshua 1 : 5, Jehovah himself says to Joshua, "As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee; I will not fail thee nor forsake thee." "Be not afraid," this is the divine promise to Jeremiah (1 : 8), "Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith Jehovah." Similar is the promise of Christ to Paul on the road to Damascus. "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Arise ! I have appeared unto thee, to make thee a minister and apostle both of the things which thou hast seen and of those thou shalt yet experience. And I will deliver thee from the people and the nations unto whom now I send thee, etc. All these promises bespeak a presence widely differing from that of Paul among the Corinthians and Colossians in the passages referred to, or of Elisha with his servant Gehazi. But by far the most emphatic and extensive one of the kind is the promise of Christ before us: "Lo, I am with you every day, or all the days (*πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας*), to the very consummation of time (*ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἵωνος*). And now add to this that he who gave the promise implying omnipresence had professed with the same breath to be omnipotent, and that with the same breath he had given a charge to his disciples to preach the Gospel to every man, woman and child,—a charge which runs down to the end of time, and which presented difficulties altogether unconquerable by flesh and blood,—and then say whether this promise, which must correspond to the profession and the charge preceding, is not

the grandest and weightiest of this kind on all the pages of the sacred records, from Genesis to Revelation.

I close unwillingly and reluctantly. I would I had another hour, at least, for practical remarks, both to the professed friends of Christ and to those who aim at a ruinous neutrality.

The object of our Lord, in this remarkable assembly, was now obtained. All his people knew who he was, their great duty in his service, their debt of love; their relation to the world was clear to them, and all that was cheering and quickening was richly given to them in the great promise. The character of the apostles was established, and that church was organized which will prove the joy of the whole earth, which the gates of hell will not overcome, and which will stand till eternity shall be no more.

All flesh is grass, and the hypocrite is lighter than vanity, and is as nothing. But before the true believer let the kings of the earth tremble, and the wise stop their mouths; for the Lord Almighty is about him, and will plead his cause. Let the sincere Christian remember that he is never alone, but that the Mahanaim of the Almighty are his van and his rearward, and surround him on the right and on the left. But this, also, is never to be forgotten, namely, that the presence of God is attached to the work of proclaiming the Gospel to the perishing world whose messenger of peace the Christian is charged to be; and that, whenever he presumes to seek his own, the impenetrable shield of his protection is gone, and the fiery darts of Satan may pierce his heart, and make a corpse of him, ready to be buried in hell.

Here is the secret unfolded why the church has been so lean at different times. She forgot and forsook her work, and Christ forsook her. But the time is at hand when she

will rise in the fulness of her strength, and sound the trumpet of the Gospel, to make the earth tremble, and the heavens resound. Then shall the omnipotent arm of her Lord be made bare, terror shall overwhelm the persevering rebel, and the glory of God shall cover the earth as the waters fill the sea. Amen.



## XVI.

### THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD.

And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water ; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel ? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you : and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up ; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel ; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you : but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. And he led them out as far as to Bethany ; and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.

So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God. ACTS 1 : 4—11. LUKE 24 : 49—52. MARK 16 : 19.

ONCE more I must call upon my hearers to accompany me in my wanderings through Judea and Galilee, while I en-

deavor to follow Christ and his little flock. With the close of this Meditation I shall dismiss a subject which I have pursued for more than a year, though not without considerable interruption.

Near forty days were now past since the resurrection of Christ from the dead. He had "showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs," and was seen repeatedly by many, under divers circumstances, and for purposes most worthy of his pursuit. All was now accomplished. The church of Christ was organized, the apostles commissioned, directions, promises and everything needful for the present, given. What the church of Christ still needed was the gift of the Holy Ghost. But the Holy Spirit himself could not be communicated till Christ was exalted and glorified. To pour out that most precious gift of heaven belonged to the glorified Saviour; and he must therefore be exalted and glorified, to send down the promise of his Father. With this event his earthly career and our subject closes, though his agency does, in fact, eminently begin there.

Jerusalem, and especially the Mount of Olives, which had seen him in his deepest humiliation, were to see him also in his highest exaltation. Thence he was to ascend up to heaven. It was very convenient for his purpose that Pentecost was now near, one of the three great festivals when all males were to appear at Jerusalem. The celebration of it fell upon the fiftieth day after Passover, or Easter, and it needed but a hint from our Lord to induce the disciples to set out a little sooner. This course was evidently in the highest degree important. On the preceding great festival, when thousands of people were assembled at Jerusalem, Christ was condemned and murdered; and when he rose lies were scattered among the multitude, saying that he was nevertheless

dead, but that his corpse was stolen and carried away. On the succeeding great festival, the operations of his Spirit were to be seen by the same congregation of strangers, and the truth was to be proclaimed to those upon whom outrageous and inconsistent falsehood had been imposed, not many weeks ago. This was decreed in the court of heaven. But, if this was to be accomplished, Christ must first return to his heavenly home and his throne; and, as I remarked, the Mount of Olives was to be the scene of the important event.

The appearance of Christ to James, his relative and afterwards bishop of the church at Jerusalem, took place, according to Paul (1 Corinthians 15: 7), after the meeting of the five hundred brethren, but probably before the last interview at Jerusalem. As no particulars are known on that subject, we omit it. It was probably in reference to his future office in the church that Christ had to give James some special directions, the details of which were important only to him.

It appears, therefore, that the eleven disciples, and several other members of the young Christian church, went up to Jerusalem about a fortnight before Pentecost. At Jerusalem our Lord appeared to them at least once more before his ascension,—where, in what house, is uncertain. It was then that he ordered them to wait at Jerusalem “for the promise of the Father,”—that is, for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; for they were, not many days hence, to be merged, as it were, in the powers and the light of heaven, just as John the Baptist had merged or immersed many in Jordan, baptizing them unto repentance.

On the fortieth day after his resurrection, they met again in some private dwelling at Jerusalem, evidently by a special appointment of their Lord. I take the “upper room” to



have been the place of meeting; not as though our Saviour attached any importance to places, nor considered one more sacred than the other; but because that family was near and dear to him, and there appears no reason why we should look for another than that endearing spot. Then, when they were all together, he appeared, and for the last time. They knew it to be the parting meeting; and what question could lie nearer to their hearts at that moment than the one they once more propounded to him, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?" Is it this that you wish us to wait for at Jerusalem? Is not the restoration of Israel's kingdom the promise of the Father, or is it not at least included in it? The expression "at this time" was going rather too far, though their anxiety for the coming of his kingdom was perfectly proper, and every true Christian in every age shares in it. His answer therefore merely is, "It is not proper for you to inquire into times unrevealed; your privilege is to receive the Holy Spirit; your duty to proclaim the truth, to build up that kingdom whose coming you so much wish, and to prepare the way for the King of glory. In proper time he will come and will not tarry." He then "led them out as far as Bethany." It was again early in the morning, it appears, for we do not read, nor do we have the least intimation, that the little company was molested, or even noticed, by anybody. "And he led them out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them." (Mark.) And "while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same



Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” (Acts 1 : 9—11.) “And they worshipped him, and returned with great joy unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day’s journey.” (Luke 24 : 52, and Acts 1 : 12.)

Here finishes the account of our Lord’s days on earth. My theme has at the same time reached its close.

Nothing could, in my view, be more profitable now, than to trace back the whole course of our Meditations, and to get a synoptical view of the subject upon which we have dwelt so long. But many of my hearers were not present at the beginning, and the interval is too great to promise any success in such retrospect. Moreover, as I have often been obliged to tax your patience by protracted discourses, it may not be amiss if I limit myself at this time to the simple utterance of my own feelings in view of the solemn ground over which I have been permitted to pass successively in the course of these Meditations.

Christ is gone to heaven, whence, on the strength of his own testimony, he came. This fact is established on the evidence of eye-witness testimony, better than most of the thousand events in general history, which everybody believes, and which it would be ridiculous to reject. But, besides all this, it is established by the evidence of prediction,—that is, Christ predicted this event in connection with other events of his life, and the others, some equally improbable and impene-trable according to human foresight, have demonstrably come to pass; and, therefore, if unsuspicious witnesses state that they saw him ascend, they ought so much the rather to receive credence. Yea, more; the event or fact in question is predicted, together with other changes in the life of our

Lord, in books not only demonstrably, but necessarily, much older than the books of the New Testament, and in books the untouched, untarnished purity of whose text is acknowledged even by those who reject their inspiration. How these men account for predictions contained in them, and which the ablest advocates of their cause never have removed nor explained fairly on their infidel principles, is none of my business,—they may see to that,—and their desire to throw down inspiration, the golden ladder that unites earth and heaven, gives me so little disturbance or concern, that I give them no thanks for sitting still. Poor worms of the dust, sincerely to be pitied ! The wicked but delusive imaginary pleasure of injuring the truth is the only reward of their hard, ungrateful, hopeless task ; for Satan, poorer still than they, can give them none, and truth can only gain by their efforts, and conquer, but not perish.

Christ is gone to heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high. This is a fact, like thousands of other facts in history, only more firmly established than the rest. But, besides its unyielding evidences, it is a fact eminently practical to every individual in this world, and in this room. It is not one of those indifferent stories, which you may believe or deny without any consequences to yourselves. No. There is a heaven-wide difference between this and common facts and occurrences, though these may attract the attention of all the world, while that lies neglected till the judgment-day.

Dividing my hearers, as I always do, into converted and unconverted ones, I shall endeavor to allude briefly to their respective relations to the exalted Saviour of sinners, to the future Judge of all flesh. And it will be quite worth your while for a few minutes to attend to a subject to which the hour of death and the judgment-day will impart an import-

ance weightier and vaster than the ocean, and in which all the frail fabrics of your earthly concerns shall be shipwrecked, and forever perish.

There is an awful moment in the history of Israel which urges itself upon our attention at this time. While Israel dwelt in the wilderness, Korah, Dathan and Abiram, and two hundred and fifty princes among the nation, rebelled against Moses and Aaron. "Ye take too much upon you," they said, "seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them; wherefore, then, lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" In vain did Moses remind them of their distinguishing privileges in the community; in vain did he call them for brotherly consultation. They refused to come, and abused and grieved him with charges equally unjust and bold. Moses, conscious of his innocence and his higher mission, was grieved, and said to the Lord, "Respect not thou their offering, for I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt any one of them." Then, laying aside willingly his authority as the law-giver of the nation, he descended to become a simple defendant, and said to Korah, "To-morrow the Lord will show who are his and who are holy; and will cause him to come near unto him (to be priest); even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him." "Be thou and all thy company before the Lord, thou and they, and Aaron, to-morrow. And take every man his censer, and put incense in them, and bring ye before the Lord every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers; thou also and Aaron, each of you his censer." This done, the glory of Jehovah appeared in the tabernacle unto all the people; "and the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying, Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a



moment." But they fell upon their faces and prayed for Israel, and their humble plea prevailed; for prayer is mighty with God. And the Lord spake again to them, and said, "Speak unto the congregation, saying, "Get up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan and Abiram." The separation was readily made, tents round about the rebels were broken up, property and families removed, and a wide chasm appeared round about. Korah, Dathan and Abiram, proud and hardened as every infidel is against God, stood at the doors of their tents with their families. "And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men, then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and if the earth open her mouth and swallow them up with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit, then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord." Nothing could have surpassed the solemnity of such an appeal directly to God,—an appeal which, whatsoever was to be the event, was necessarily big with important and irretrievable consequences. Moses, the man of God, the mediator between Jehovah and Israel, and their saviour from reproach and bondage and idolatry,—the man who was in all his offices a type of Christ,—he had given for years the most unquestionable proof of his higher mission, and every candid Israelite was convinced and clave to him. But Korah, Dathan and Abiram, and their company, whose hearts were wrong and full of ambition, resisted successfully the evidence of Moses' mission. It was absolutely impossible to give them more and better proofs than they already had resisted and rejected; and what could Moses do more or less rather than to



appeal to God himself, and commit the decision to him in the sight of all Israel? The appeal is made; Korah, Dathan and Abiram, are standing in their doors unmoved, and all the people at a distance look on with awful interest. A few moments of interval,—a sullen, breathless silence, such as precedes the dreaded shock of the earthquake, when no wind dares to breathe and creatures stand in breathless expectation,—Korah, Dathan and Abiram's fates are pending, and the last seconds of repentance rolling by;—the last one comes, arrives, passes unredeemed,—a shock, a shriek of terror, and they are gone, and Israel flees affrighted from the smoking pit, saying, "Lest the earth swallow us up also. And there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense."

But if "he that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses, of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

In the fulness of time Christ came in the flesh, according to numerous and unquestionable predictions. God bore testimony to his divine mission by the true word of prophecy, and audibly in the hearing of friends and foes; and he himself, whom his adversaries could not and cannot accuse of one sin, bore witness of himself and sealed his conviction with his own blood; and his numerous friends, men of sound mind and upright character, gave him record to their own temporal harm, and persevered in their testimony unto death; and his still more numerous enemies sealed the whole mass of evidence by their infernal conduct, which showed on what side they were, and by their ridiculous and self-contradictory lies,

than which they had nothing better to defend their perishing cause withal. Christ rose from the dead, and took his place on the throne of the universe. The word of God has been attacked by every weapon of learning, wit, and fraud; and the church of Christ, by civil power and brute force often, and always by the haughty contempt of those who professedly never experienced anything of her heavenly peace and joy. But both stand unmoved. Stand?—No. They extend, they spread, they pierce unknown regions; they enlighten and redeem men's souls, in spite of the world, and Satan and all his host; and they are living witnesses that Christ liveth and reigneth.

Here let the sceptic say whether more evidence than this could, according to the laws of mind, have been given. But yet he believes not. Why not?—Because he will not believe. He is like Korah, Dathan and Abiram, standing coldly and smiling in the door of his tent. Not Moses, but Christ, has made the last deciding appeal, and that to the judgment-day. The sceptic wants more evidence—more evidence. The authentic history of the life, the death, the resurrection, and the ascension of Christ, are nothing unto him; the unaccountable existence and continuance of his truth is nothing. But Christ will sit unmoved on his throne till the great day of reckoning draws nigh. The sceptic will have no more evidence nor proof till the sign of the Son of Man appear in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth mourn and weep. “An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it but the sign of the prophet Jonas. For, as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, because

they repented at the preaching of Jonas,—and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here ! The queen of the south shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it ; for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon,—and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here ! ” Korah, Dathan and Abiram, shall rise up in judgment with the generation of our sceptics and worldlings, and condemn it ; because they resisted only the mission of Moses,—and, behold, a greater than Moses is here ! During the few seconds of their fleeting lives, their case is pending, and the acts of heaven are kept open. There is silence in heaven for every sinner by the space of half an hour, and the sun lingers and lingers on the horizon. But there is a time when saving mercy retires weeping, and when justice recovers its claims ; when God arises, and swears, in his wrath, that they shall not enter into his rest ; and then the ground cleaves, and they perish without remedy. Death and the grave come, and they descend quickly into the pit, and come no more till the trumpet of the resurrection pierce their graves. But, then, then they will appear, though they hide themselves in the centre of the earth. O, what a sight will it then be, to the multitudes of unbelieving kings, statesmen, philosophers and scholars, rich and mighty men, standing speechless, confounded and condemned, before the judgment-seat of Christ, whom they used to consider a phantom, and infinitely below them ! Then, too, they will no more say to us, as they do now, “ Ye take too much upon you, ye preachers of the Gospel, to condemn so many honorable, well-bred people ; seeing all the congregation are holy, and the Lord is among them : wherefore, then, lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord, and think yourselves justified in preaching needless terror ? ” This they



say now; but we have the consolation not to have taken anything from them, nor to have hurt one of them. But then they will see that we are the men who, at the expense of their own comfort and popularity, threw themselves between them and ruin. Too late they will acknowledge that the faithful, home-spoken sermon was a token of regard and affection worth all the idle phraseologies of a deceitful world.

This, then, is your situation,—mark it well! Christ sits at the right hand of God. The mass of the evidence of his divine mission, and the terms of salvation, and the threats of perdition, encompass you as the ambient air, which you cannot escape: you are standing there in the door of your tabernacle, and not Israel, but Heaven, looks on your daring with amazement and sorrow. Your case is awfully pending; the moments of mercy are gliding away, and the day, the moment of decision, draws nigh, and will soon be present, and soon past, to be recalled no more. O, that you were wise to consider your latter end, and make the Judge your friend!

But this situation need not be yours. Come over to the people of God! Kiss the Son before he be angry, and ye shall not perish in the way! Come out of Egypt, and settle in some corner of Goshen, and your change will be as it were from midnight into noon. For there, where the people of God dwell, there subsists a relation to the exalted Saviour which could not be more delightful.

Though ascended up to heaven, he is with them alway, even unto the end of the world. What I now say is neither delusion nor exaggeration, but reality more sober, more real, than this visible world; for it has the evidence, not of material, but of spiritual experience. The glorified Saviour is with his people. He dwells in their dwellings, as at Bethany; he meets them in the closet; he guides their family devotion;



he blesses and breaks their bread at table ; he prospers them in their work, and blesses them as they go out and as they come in. In prosperity he tunes their hearts and voices for the sacred song of praise, and in affliction gives them the spirit of prayer and the hope of heaven. He is husband to the widow, father to the fatherless, the all-sufficient companion of the solitary, a physician to the sick, a guide to the pilgrim. He is the spiritual Rock from which they drink and live forever ; the Manna that came down from heaven ; his people eat, and the second death has lost its power. Everywhere and always his particular providence is over them, in the shady cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, till they are in the promised land. He is their High Priest, and their names are written upon his breast ; and from his countenance beam the unfading Urim and Thummin, by which they steer their course to heaven. They are not set adrift, like the world, and at the mercy of every wind, and drawing near to the all-devouring maelstrom of the pit ; but their course is to the port of endless rest, and Christ is at the helm. Until he perish, they are safe. Taught by Christ, who is their teacher, their views of earth and heaven, of social, political, intellectual, moral and religious subjects, are spiritualized, refined, and sanctified ; and their better existence in union with Christ has begun. Their sorrows are sweet, and their joys profitable ; all is seasoned with heavenly spices, and the hope of eternal life ; the dawning of this eternal morning borders the interesting landscape of their pilgrimage, and the end of their faith is the grand promise to inherit all things, and to reign with Christ forever.

Shout, little flock, with the voice of triumph ! Fear not ! Thy God reigneth. Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh. Weep not too much that your beloved is

despised and rejected of men. He is above the sneers of worms ; and his omnipotent voice will ere long hush into eternal silence the wit and the wisdom of this world. " Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." " As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall (also) the coming of the Son of Man be." He will come in the glory of his Father ; his train shall fill the heavens, and the earth shall be full of his praise. Judgment will be held,—his eternal kingdom will commence in the sight of all the universe ; your desire and longing for his honor will be satisfied perfectly ; and not a mind, in heaven, earth or hell, shall doubt that Jesus reigns. In the all-revealing light of the judgment-day, every knee will bow to him and every tongue confess him LORD, whether it be willingly or unwillingly, whether with the shout of sacred joy and praise, or with the gnashing of fruitless despair. Grand, grand beyond human and angelic conception, will be the scene, when the proclamation of his eternal royalty shall make the arch of heaven ring, then resound to earth, and roll through the caverns of the world of woe ! At the judgment-day, which is drawing nigh apace, all will and must acknowledge him ; and at the great moment of eternal parting the unnumbered multitudes of the redeemed at the right hand of the Judge, and the lost, condemned rebels on his left, more numerous than the sands on the sea-shore, will join in one thundering chorus, saying, " Jesus reigneth ! — almighty to save, or to ruin ! His name endureth forever ! " — And all the universe will answer, Amen !

## EIGHT MEDITATIONS

ON THE

## SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER OF JOHN.





# I.

## THE APPROACH.

These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come ; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee : as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. — JOHN 17 : 1, 2.

THE evening of the Passover was now passed, and its solemn ceremonies closed. The old dispensation, with all its sacred rites, had done its work ; and the evening sacrifice, offered but a few hours before, was the last *legitimate* offering of the kind. The Lord's Supper was instituted, and the new dispensation, resting upon better promises, had now risen upon our world. The Law had borne its terrific witness to the holiness of God and the radical corruption of mankind ; the Gospel now took the lead, proclaiming free and sovereign grace. Moses had retired, and Christ was about, within a few hours of sublunary time, to enter into the Holy of Holies in heaven, with his own blood, an high priest forever, after the order of Melchisedek. He had spoken nearly his *last words* to his disciples, in the three preceding chapters ; words of great solemnity, richness and power, and of a character altogether peculiar, and different from anything they had ever heard even from *his* lips. Judas Iscariot had stolen away several hours before, never again to meet that

blessed circle. Jesus and his beloved ones, whom he loved even unto the end, were alone; his disciples' looks hung on his blessed countenance as he spoke; gradually preparing to leave for Gethsemane, the old, accustomed olive-yard, when Jesus, to close the solemn season, "lifted up his eyes to heaven," opened his lips, and sent up to heaven devout aspirations, such as they, nor man, nor angel, had ever heard before. I speak advisedly. At no other earlier period of the divine economy could this prayer have been offered. This was the *first* moment, and the only one till now, when the sentiments of this prayer could appropriately be uttered by Christ; and no other being could *ever* have made use of them. This prayer stands alone, from all eternity past to all eternity to come.

Of its infinite beauty, power and importance, I say nothing. They may appear to some degree, if it please God to open my lips and your hearts, as we shall proceed now, and, God permitting, on future occasions, to contemplate its sacred contents. A pious and distinguished interpreter of the Bible used to call the Gospel of John "Jesus' breast," a comparison equally just and beautiful. But the seventeenth chapter of this Gospel will be found to be the crystal window in that breast, through which we are permitted to look into the innermost recess of his holy mind. May we have eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to understand!

I shall arrange my remarks under the following three heads, namely:

I. THE POSITION JESUS ASSUMES.

II. THE PETITION HE OFFERS.

III. THE PURPOSES HE MANIFESTS.

I. The *position* which our Saviour assumes, while lifting up his eyes to heaven, is marked by the very first word he

utters,—“Father!” When *we* address our superiors, the greater the distance between them and us, the more particularly is used in the address, the more words are generally employed. The Scriptures themselves suggest a great variety of terms and epithets which we are to use when *we* address the majesty of heaven. Between Christ and his Father, the *one* word, “Father,” is enough in the most solemn and eventful moment. Christ had designated God by the endearing term of Father more frequently than any other person recorded in Scripture. But what is worthy of special remark is, that he never called him *our* Father, as he taught his disciples to do; no, neither in speaking *to* him in prayer, nor in speaking *of* him to others. Alluding to God’s providential kindness towards the needy, he indeed says, “*Your* Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things;” and to the praying believer he says, “*Thy* Father” “seeth in secret.” But he never says, *our* Father knoweth our need; or, *our* Father seeth in secret. He was in another sense Son from what we are, namely, *the* Son; while we, if believers, are sons and daughters, *children*, and that *in Christ*. He is *the* Son of *the* Father; and the nearest approach between himself and us is indicated by the expression he once used,—“*My* Father, and *your* Father,”\*

\* Were I to paraphrase this remarkable passage (John 20: 17) penned by that Evangelist, whose great object it is to set forth the *divinity* of Christ,—not his humanity,—and our participation of the divine nature in Christ, I should render it thus: Such is the connection which will forever exist between me, the risen Saviour, and you, my believers, that the Father to whom I now ascend is *your* Father, because he is *my* Father; and *my* God, because he is *your* God. My manifestation in the flesh, the uniting of myself into *one* with the body of the church as her inseparable Head (Eph. 1: 22, 23), makes *me* forever participate in *her* creature relation

not *our* Father. In speaking of him, he calls him "*The* Father," as the one to whom the term applied in a certain sense exclusively, and of whom he asserts that none knoweth him, *of himself*, but "*the* Son;" that is, he to whom the term "Son" applies as it does to no other being. He frequently speaks of him to his most confidential disciples, calling him *my* Father. When wrestling in prayer, in deepest anguish, he appeals to the tenderest and holiest sympathies of that Father who had *all* his pleasure in him, by saying, "*My* Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" or, to express the calmest intimacy, the most perfect union of feeling and purpose, he says, "Father" — "Father, glorify thy name!" And so here, "Father, the hour is come."

True, when the Spirit of grace, speaking as it were himself in the heart of the believer, almost supersedes the agency of the latter, his groaning of unutterable and unutterably sweet intimacy is, "Abba, Father!" But he does this as the *spirit of adoption*; in Christ alone the believer enjoys this privilege, while Jesus says, "Father" in his, *the Son's own name*.

"The hour is come." He reminds his Father of the arrival of an hour predetermined between them from eternity, — known to them both, and known to no one else in creation. "The hour is come." This he says, not as though the Father could forget, or could lose his interest in, that "hour." No. But, as it was the hour of untold sufferings to be undergone by the Son, in offering up himself, freely and without constraint, for a sinful world, it was meet that the "right-

(compare 1 Cor. 15 : 28), and *her* in my *eternal* relation to the Sacred Trinity, proper allowance being made for the eternal difference between the Creator of all, and the most privileged creature of his hand, the chosen object of his tenderest and strongest affection.



eous Father" should, in the exercise both of holy sympathy and justice, leave it to *the Son* first to recognize that hour, and to *present himself* for the dread expiation it demanded. Here the right of precession belongs to *the Son*, and it is *the Father's* delight that he should have it. *They two are one*, and most particularly and perfectly one about *that "hour."* "The hour is come," says the Son, to pay the debt of a world, to bear the wrath of an offended God, the curse of the violated law; to be *bruised of Jehovah, smitten, stricken of God*; to be put to grief by infinite goodness, harassed by the powers of darkness, abused, scourged, mocked, reviled, trampled upon, by infuriated, tiger-hearted, wretches set on fire of hell, and all that till the debt, the enormous debt of sin, be cancelled, and all "finished,"—then to die, suspended on the accursed tree! *That "hour is come,"* Father, and I am ready; delay not THOU! I have signed the deed; the payment is to be made with my blood, mine own "soul" laid upon the altar as "an offering for sin," and "poured out" "unto death." Demand this blood, let this soul be poured out; for the hour *is* come, and *I am here.* Arise, and ask, and I will pay, even unto the last farthing! This *position* is morally grand beyond conception or utterance.

But there is another particular to be noticed in the position of Christ. Christ is conscious of a reciprocation and interchange existing between himself and the Father, and that at *this hour*, with which his own deepest humiliation commenced.

"Glorify thy Son, that thy Son may also glorify thee." Men glorify God by giving unto him, in word and work, "the glory due unto his name." And He glorifies believers by receiving them into his heavenly kingdom; for "whom he

hath justified, them hath he also glorified," — that is, irrevocably destined and sealed unto eternal glory with himself. But our passage has nothing in common with sentiments like these. Here, the Father and the Son are to glorify one another *mutually* and *essentially in the same sense*. Each is to show forth before heaven and earth the glory of the other, in the great transactions of the solemn period of our globe which had now arrived, and to which this petition of Christ is most obviously *confined*. The particulars of this great transaction belong to another part of this discourse. Here it suffices to realize it, that Jesus, at the eve of *his dying the death of a criminal slave*, claims to stand with the infinite God on the same ground, as being engaged with him in the very act of their mutually glorifying each other !

If this be the case, it is not strange that Jesus should express further the consciousness of possessing "power over all men," and that by the Father's own will and agency. This power is "*all* power in heaven and on earth," or omnipotence; and if omnipotence, then *sovereign* power. It extends thus to all men, high and low, old and young, in all parts of the earth, and throughout all ages. It extends to all their inward states, motives and feelings, and all their outward interests, concerns and pursuits. It overrules all the influences, unnumbered and mighty as they often are, which have a bearing upon men's characters, actions and ultimate destiny. It covers the whole ground of their temporal and eternal weal and woe. He *has* "power over all flesh," and *will have* it forever. It extends beyond this world, to all that is comprehended in Scripture by the terms *eternal, heaven, and hell*.

This is the position he assumes over against the whole world, present, past, and future. God has made them all

over to his Son. Go to him, and what he says to you, do ! This is the divine, unalterable command to "all men."

"Power over all flesh !" Mark it, sinners ! he, Jesus, has sovereign power over *you* ! You are perfectly in his power, wherever you go. Whether you ascend up to heaven, or descend into the pit, or hide in the cavern of Carmel, or in the centre of the earth, or in the bottom of the sea, or in impenetrable darkness, you are everywhere alike in his sovereign hand ! Whether you are alone, or linked by bands of wickedness with millions of sinners, and in covenant with death and hell, you are alike at his most perfect disposal. Nor is there any respect of persons. Kings are worms, kingdoms are mole-hills, sceptres are straw, and crowns and jewels dust. Eighteen centuries bear witness to what I say. He has struck through kings, in the day of his wrath. They that refused to kiss the Son have perished from the way, and must ultimately all perish. Idolatrous nations have gone to ruin by the millions ; infidel kingdoms have become an eternal desolation. The history of the world is indeed not the judgment-day ; but it is its preparation, its prelude. Its voice, if it is dumb on this subject, is dumb only to the deaf. Or why has not this Jesus and his hated Gospel long since ceased from the memory of man ? Why is his name, now while I am speaking, the greatest name in human history ? He has "power over all flesh." He has power, sovereign power, over you and me, and he will have it while eternity endures. You will acknowledge his power, and feel his control, either with infinite delight in heaven, or with insupportable anguish in hell. And to that there will be no end,—*absolutely no end*,—no fear of its cessation in glory, no hope of it in the pit, forever !



And dares any one of my hearers say of *this* Jesus, "I will not have him to reign over me" ?

II. Jesus offers a prayer : " Father, glorify thy Son." What the term to " glorify " means in this connection, I have already indicated. But let us look at it more particularly. The Father was not to glorify the Son merely by receiving him into glory after his expiatory death, any more than the Son was to glorify the Father by so doing. " The hour is come," he said ; not of his ascension, which was yet forty-three days distant, but the hour of his last sufferings and his expiatory death. But this was also " the hour " in which the Father was to glorify him. His ascension and entrance into that glory which he had with the Father before the world was are indeed not *excluded* from the petition, as v. 5 shows. But that *royal* glory, which now was to become also the *mediatorial* glory of Jesus, is but a *part* of what he prays for ; it is but the ultimate and eternal irradiation of that *inner and moral* glory which, in fact, began with the moment of his appropriately *expiatory* sufferings and death ; it is the eternal fruit and consequence of this truly glorious work of transcending, divine love. Shortly before, he had said, " The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified ;" and the way in which this should be done he plainly indicated there to be that of falling like a dying grain of wheat into the ground, to bring forth " much fruit." The glory Jesus prayed for was preëminently *the glory of dying love*.

In this prayer, however, his *own* glory was not the chief end, but, as he said, " Father, glorify *thy* name !" In fact, the glory of the Father and that of the Son in the work of redemption are absolutely inseparable. This is already and most wonderfully and delightfully conspicuous in the very first words with which our Saviour opened his last conversa-



tion with his disciples, of which conversation the prayer contained in our chapter is the close. Allow me to give that passage to you in a form more free than a professed version has a right to do. No sooner has the traitor Judas left the upper chamber, when Jesus begins by saying, "Now shall the Son of Man be glorified, and God will be glorified *by him*. If God be glorified *by the Son*, God—that is, the Father—will also glorify the Son *by himself*; and this will now *forthwith* begin to take place. (John 13: 31, 32.) Thus you see how their united glory consists preëminently in the work of redemption, and that that glory is inseparable, mutual and equal.

But the question returns, *What* specifically did Jesus ask of the Father, in saying, "Glorify thy Son"? He asks, that, while himself engaged in the dread work of expiating our sins, the Father should maintain and set forth before the universe the glory and majesty of his—that is, the incarnate Son's—personal character, which he now surrendered to the keeping of the Father,—a glory which they enjoyed unitedly before creation's first dawn (verse 5),—and particularly his glory in the great work of his dying love.

And this the Father did, by all those miraculous manifestations of his *peculiar* and *personal interest* in the atonement wrought by his eternal Son which accompanied the last hours of Jesus, and made his death different from that of all other men. He did it by the supernatural darkness from the sixth to the ninth hour; the convulsions of the earth, the rending of the rocks, the opening of graves, the resurrection of saints who slept, the descent of angels; and ultimately by the Son's own glorious resurrection, which, although he had power and right to effect it himself, was, by the consent of both, called forth "by the glory of the Father," who thus with infinite delight, and with his own hands, crowned the work of the

redemption, wrought by his only-begotten Son, with divine and eternal glory.

The Father glorified the Son by *coöperating* with him in his great work of redeeming, self-sacrificing devotion to his Father's glory, and to the souls of men. That matchless obedience, even unto death, towards his Father, which Jesus cherished while on earth, and that incredible love and compassion of his for perishing souls, could certainly not be tried and exhibited in their moral glory, by any conceivable means, as they were by the deep agonies of Gethsemane and Golgotha. Herein was love ! Here shone brightest the glory of Him who is pre-eminently and forever HOLY LOVE. But in all this great work of love the Father must *consent*. And he must *co-operate* in it, too ; for *he* was to "bruise" his holy child Jesus, and "put him to grief ;" *he* was to make the "soul" of his eternal Son "an offering for sin ;" *he* was to crown the anguish of his beloved one by the stern hiding of his own countenance ; *he* had to appoint and direct all the circumstances, and control all the agencies, that had a bearing upon the event of Jesus' suffering and death. For the glory of the Son consisted in being the perfectly passive "Lamb of God," led to the slaughter and dumb before his shearers ; while the active management and the positive carrying out of the whole dread scene rested in the hand of the Father.

The Father glorified the Son by *owning* and *accepting* the work of redemption. The blood of his Son was, in the balance of the sanctuary, to be found and declared amply sufficient *really* to pay the moral debt of our whole world. The giving up of his mortal breath for us was to be found and declared as honoring the Law, *at least as much* as the eternal damnation of every sinner under heaven, from Adam to his last offspring, could have done. The Son's obedience, in doing

and suffering the "righteous Father's" will even unto death, was to be acknowledged and authorized as a new-created moral treasure, not claimed from Christ by the reverent law, because he is its *master*, not its servant; and yet available to us, the insolvent debtors of the law, because wrought by him freely in *our nature* and *for us*,—wrought by the prototype of humanity, the man both original and final, central to the race, and head inseparable over his own body, the church. That vicarious obedience by the Son the Father is to declare as *unclaimed* by the law, and *capable* to be disposed of rightfully and in a sovereign manner *by the Son*, for the justification at the bar of heaven of all whom the Son should *choose to justify and to save*. Add to all this the necessary concomitants and consequences, namely, the spoiling of the powers of darkness of all their claims upon our race, the ascension of Jesus, his sitting at the right hand of the Father as High Priest and King forever, the concession to him of all power in heaven and on earth,—that is, the prerogatives of Divinity for his human nature also, and of the right to pour out the Holy Spirit upon whom he pleased, though it be upon "all flesh," and at the last day of the right to judge the quick and the dead, and irrevocably to decide the eternal destiny of every soul that ever breathed upon the earth,—and you have a glimpse of the depth of the prayer, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son." And all this the Father *has* done with unutterable complacency, taking the darling of his heart, his own self and soul, from the accursed tree; calling him *by his own glory* from the bowels of the earth, highly to exalt him, and to give him a name which is above every name, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of beings in heaven, of beings in earth, and beings under the earth, and that *every tongue* should

confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2: 9—11.)

Truly the Son is glorious!

III. To desire celestial bliss is not selfish even in us, if it be but understood what heaven is. But for Jesus to long for it was but to long for his own eternal and inalienable divine prerogative. To desire the glory of dying for *sinner*s is *benevolence* more than human or angelic. (Rom. 5: 7.) Christ prayed for both these objects, but especially for the latter; yet *to be* glorified was not in itself the *object* of his soul, but the *means* for attaining to the accomplishment of what was præeminently precious in his view, and desired and longed for with all the strength of his exalted mind. What was that?

What it was is evident from his *purposes* expressed, of which we are now to speak.

Hear him. — "Father, that thy Son may also glorify thee!" There it is! Not his own glory, but his *Father's* glory, is the *object* of his soul, to which he was prepared to press on through seas of blood and tears, suffering in the contest the spite and wrath of earth and hell, the crushing weight of the omnipotent arm, raised to bring down upon him the equivalent of sin's universal desert, and the very hidings of his Father's countenance! O, holy desire, glorious eagerness, for the highest and noblest object! Sacred, matchless soul, this! — swallowed up in the glory of God, the Father of mercies, the just and Holy One, who loveth holiness with an infinite love, and infinitely hates sin, though found by legal transfer upon the head of his only-begotten Son!

But how does he purpose to glorify his Father? (1.) By exhibiting through his vicarious death for sinners the *wisdom* of God in devising a plan of salvation equally calculated to



redeem the sinner from ruin, to sanctify him for an abode in heaven, and to magnify the divine law, and make it honorable before the whole universe. (2.) By satisfying the unbending *justice* of God, by *really* and *honestly* paying in his own person "the *last farthing*" due to the law, in proof that God *will maintain that law*, though it be against his own Son, if he be but the *legal*, not the real, debtor to its violated sanction. He glorifies God by exhibiting (3) his *love* of God; which love proves to be *so great*, that he gave up his only-begotten Son into death, to save those that were ready to perish; counting the salvation of perishing souls an object dearer to his compassionate heart than the undiminished, uninterrupted bliss of the eternal Son. And certain it is, that there exist no known means, in the two-fold realms of creation and providence, by which the justice and love of the Father could have been exalted to any degree bearing the most distant comparison to the refulgence by which the scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary surround them. To do this was the passion of his soul, and the unwavering purpose of his holy mind.

There is another purpose of Jesus, which he manifests in our text, verse 2: "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." He accepts, as Mediator, "power over all flesh," "all power in heaven and in earth;" and prepares, through sufferings and death,—divine justice being thus satisfied,—to rise with his human body and soul to a seat at the right hand of God, "far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in *this* world, but also in *that which is to come* (Eph. 1: 21), that he might accomplish his benevolent purpose,

and give eternal life to those whom the Father gave unto him in the eternal council of sovereign grace.

Nor does it appear that this purpose and the longings of Jesus were *primarily* directed to glorifying his Father, while to give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him was a mere *secondary* object with him. No doubt, the infinite and eternal God of the universe must, of necessity, have the preference in all things. But, in the mind and the petition of Jesus, these two objects seem to *penetrate each other*, and his divine views and feelings, combined with his holy human affections, united equally in a prayerful desire for the glory of his Father, with whom he was one eternal nature, and for the salvation of sinners, with whom he was one body and soul. His divine and human nature joined in the immutable purpose of realizing both, through the great work of his all-sufficient atonement.

This is the purpose, this the resolution of his will, from the accomplishment of which no power in the universe can turn him, and which is so precious in his sight that he prepares — calling for his Father's dread coöperation in the frightful task — for pouring out his soul unto death, drinking the cup of God's wrath, and bowing to the billows of woe, which both earth and hell were now ready to roll over his devoted head. And this purpose he accomplished, and thus became the *only* and *sovereign* bestower of *eternal life*.

And now, brother and sister in Christ, see what a Saviour you have! Praise him who is the help of your countenance and your God! Love him who loved you first, and with an infinite love! Glorify him who desired his own glory but for *your* salvation!

Sinners, worldly, careless souls, see what a Saviour you reject! Look at his free and generous love, and feel the

meanness and the blackness of your conduct. Reflect upon the exaltation of his character, and realize the iniquity and the peril of your course. Think what noble obligations you are so happily under, and submit to the sceptre of his love. Whoever you are, know that Jesus has power over *you*,—the Father gave it him. That power you will feel, if you turn not, on that great day of the wrath of the Lamb,—a wrath less bearable to the *soul*, than the weight of all the mountains of the earth would be to the *body*, if that could feel *all* their weight. That power you will feel *forever*. Jesus never will, and never can, give up his sovereign power over you, nor relinquish his claims. O, turn, while it is called to-day, and he will give unto *you* also “*eternal life*”!

Thus, brethren and sisters, has Christ *sanctified* the path of self-devotion, to the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Through *his* merits, all *our* resolutions and purposes will now be accepted of God, and blessed to the production of good in his kingdom. And the *strength* we need for walking in these his glorious footsteps he has merited and procured, and we may come and take freely, even unto death. Unto him be glory forever!

## II.

### ETERNAL LIFE.

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. — JOHN 17 : 3.

ETERNAL *life!* What a sound ringing through the agonizing groans of our world, where all is *dying!* *Eternal life* for men, prepared for men, and accessible to them,—yes, offered to and urged upon them! What a message to those who are every moment exposed to *eternal death!* And are any of you indifferent to the sound? O, that I could lead you to the brink of death, the *second death*, to make you see and realize *that* it is, and *what* it is! How attentively would you then listen to the voice of the Son of God, saying, “This is eternal life, that —” “What? what is eternal life, and where is it?” would you tremblingly exclaim,—and not a syllable of his reply would escape your attentive ear.

But all of us are not indifferent to this sound. To those, then, who feel somewhat the importance of the term, I desire to address the sentiment of our text, for their instruction and comfort; to those who doubt, disbelieve or despise, it may be for their condemnation. This God only knoweth. May his sovereign will be done! Yes, as this present moment is called to-day, I pray that we may all to-day lay hold on “eternal life,” as it is offered to us in our text.



Our text is plain. I shall have to speak,

I. OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE ONLY TRUE GOD.

II. OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIM WHOM HE HATH SENT.

I. God, *as God*, cannot be *known*, except by himself. Infinitude alone can comprehend the infinite. But in his *manifestations of himself* in the economies of nature, of providence, and of grace, he can be known. This knowledge, if it were *direct*, and untarnished by sin, and consequently adequate, would not only comprehend, but infinitely surpass, all other knowledge belonging to the same respective spheres of thought. A knowledge of God as *Creator*, if adequate, would unlock all the recondite secrets of nature; analyzing to perfection both the visible and the invisible worlds, and laying bare the first springs of universal secondary being and causation, and the unnumbered relations of all the parts of creation to one another, and to the whole. A knowledge of God as governor of the world, if adequate, would leave neither secret nor difficulty in the confused, perplexing moral ferment, called human history; would satisfactorily account for every imperfection, as well as beauty, in the changes and revolutions of creation, animate or inanimate, and enable us with transparent clearness to penetrate and appreciate beforehand the specific grounds and reasons upon which rest the decisions of eternal judgment.

But I must economize with my time, and would merely say that our text does not speak of this kind of knowledge, however valuable it might be, *were* it attainable by us. For *such* a knowledge of God would not be eternal life. It is too purely intellectual for that. Our text speaks of a knowledge of God which is *eternal life*, and which, fortunately for us, is attainable by us, and that *at present*.

What knowledge of God is that? Look at the context. To whom does the Saviour speak? He speaks, not to the absolute, eternal, incomprehensible mind; not even to the Creator, Preserver, or Ruler of all things; but to his *Father* (v. 1), whom he calls here "the only true God," who had sent him, his only-begotten Son (text), with whom he had *all* things in common (v. 10),—between whom and him existed a perfect reciprocity (v. 1), and whose eternal glory he expected to share again, as he had done from all eternity past (v. 24).

Thus, without going beyond the limits of our chapter, we see that that God who is "the only true God," and whose knowledge is "eternal life," is not that abstract being which figures under the name of God in many systems of philosophy and of religion,—both of them falsely so called; not that general distant deity of many of our modern authors, and our Socinian, Unitarian writers, with whose religious sentiments the Brahmin and the Ssoofee, the Rabbi and the Derwish, would alike readily sympathize; not the cold, unknowable universal cause, destiny, or general indiscriminating, unconscious Providence, which worldly men are willing generally to acknowledge. No! "The only true God," whose knowledge is "eternal life," is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; that God whose divine perfections, free and boundless grace, sovereign will, and eternal counsels, are revealed in the history of redemption; he who so loved this apostate world as to give his only-begotten and equal Son, to become, clothed in human flesh, a ransom for their sins; who, with infinite complacency, bore audible witness to the blessed work of his Son, accepted his eternal sacrifice, raised him from the dead by his own glory, called him to his right hand, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and

every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come ;” who committed to him all power in heaven and on earth, acknowledged his rightful title to pour down upon the earth his blessed spirit, and delighted to glorify his holy child Jesus, from his descent to the earth and his birth, in all his humble and hidden life, his painful labors, his sufferings and his death, his glorious resurrection, and his present reign in divine majesty and bliss. This God, *God thus revealed*, is “the only true God,” whose knowledge is “eternal life.” The rest are idols of human conceit, however much of interesting truth may be mixed with their conception ; relative to “eternal life,” they are useless abstractions, which neither hear, nor see, nor speak, nor save.

Now, as to the *knowledge* of him,— what is it ?

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him : neither *can* he known them, because they are spiritually discerned.” Thus Paul, 1 Cor. 2 : 14. That knowledge of “the only true God,” which is “eternal life,” is not the *mere acquaintance with religious facts* ; nor the bare, though honest, acknowledgment of their reality and importance ; nor the intellectual acquisition of a doctrine, or a truth. All this may leave a man “*dead* in trespasses and sins.” This leads me to remark that there is recognized in Scripture a knowledge of God unto judgment, and another unto salvation. “That which may be *known* of God is manifest to them (that is, the *Gentiles*), for God hath showed it unto them.” (Rom. 1 : 19.) Paul contends that the heathens “knew God” (v. 21), and concludes, that “they are without excuse” (v. 20). “They did not like to *retain* God in their *knowledge*,” but changed him into a lie ; and, “knowing the judgment of God,” plunged into sin, and perished



“even without knowledge.” And to his bitterest enemies among the *Jews* Christ says, “Yes, ye both *know* me, and know whence I am” (John 7: 28); and yet declares unto them (8: 19), “Ye neither know me nor my Father.” The heathens are defined in the Scriptures as men who know not God. They know him in one sense, but in another they are utterly ignorant of him.

The knowledge is more than an acquaintance with religious truth, however thorough and valuable, or an acknowledgment of it, however honest; else it could not be “eternal life.” What, then, is it? I answer, it is like the knowledge you have of your affectionate and beloved earthly father. You see him, you hear him, you exchange thoughts and feelings with him; you learn, as far as it concerns you, his mind and his purposes; you pour into his heart your sorrows and your joys. All this does cherish and increase a close fellowship of mind and heart between you both. Your father knows you, and you know him. But this knowledge which you have of your father involves *complacency*, *affection*, because it is a knowledge of his *loveliness*, and of his *love to you* in particular. It begets and cherishes harmony between you two, and has a transforming influence upon your character, in all those traits of your parent which you perceive to be good and praiseworthy. It is a knowledge greatly controlling you and guiding *your actions*, because it is an approving knowledge of *his will*. It is a knowledge drawing you nearer to him constantly, and filling you with calm and sweet delight in his society.

Change the terms, and put into the place of your earthly father the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,—our Father which is in heaven,—and you have a correct definition of



what that knowledge of "the only true God" is, which is "eternal life."

But the carnal mind is enmity against God, and desires not to *retain* his knowledge as taught by creation, much less to *obtain* that which is taught by his *Word* and *Spirit*. The knowledge, therefore, here spoken of, involves a previously wrought *change* and *renewal of heart and mind*. And, as regeneration is a divine *work* in man, so this knowledge is a divine *gift* to him. It is not placed within our independent control; for no man knoweth "the Father," "save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." (Mat. 11: 28.) It is a matter of *experimental revelation*, made by Christ to him who is to have it; and it is that from its beginning, throughout its growth and progress, to the end.

But he to whom the Son is to make this revelation must *know the Son*; and this brings us to our second topic.

II. The knowledge of him whom "the only true God" "hath sent."

"And Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

This is the only instance in which our Saviour calls himself Jesus Christ. I take these to be the very words of Christ, as it would have been preposterous in John to make additions to *that last prayer*. And, indeed, the occasion called for both terms, *Jesus* and *Christ*.

Jesus, or, as the name looks in other cases, Joshua or Hoshea, means, literally translated, Jehovah-Saviour. It may thus have designated an individual the prayerful desire of whose parents was, in their giving him that name, that Jehovah might be his Saviour. This was, no doubt, the case, in most cases, when the name was given to infants. It may appropriately designate a person by whom Jehovah gives

salvation, as was proverbially the case with Joshua, the successor of Moses, and with the High Priest under whose administration the worship of God was reëstablished after the return of the Jews from Babylon. Only one more signification of this name is conceivable, namely, that of *Jehovah* in the character of a *Saviour*, or Jehovah-Saviour, as indeed the name sounds. This I take to be the divinely intended meaning in the case of the incarnate Son of God. Hence the express divine direction given by the angel that *this* should be his name, in preference to names like Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, God with us, Shiloh, Branch of David. None of all these names has that fulness of meaning as Jehovah-Saviour, when taken in its fullest meaning. This position, briefly indicated here, as to the meaning of the name Jesus, I consider perfectly capable of satisfactory proof. As to the term Christ, it is the same with Messiah, the anointed,—either King, or Priest, or both, which latter is the case here. (Zech. 6 : 13.) Hence, in saying “that they might know” “Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent,” Jesus said “that they might know him who is Jehovah their Saviour, and the anointed King and High Priest of his own people.”

In chapter 14 : 1, he said to the disciples, “Ye believe in God, believe also in me ;” thus declaring that *belief* in God, as such, however sincere, was not sufficient to make a man a *believer*, or secure the salvation of his immortal soul. And now, just as their *faith* in God without faith in Christ was declared inadequate, so here the knowledge of the only true God, and of him whom he hath sent, is placed on the *same ground*. This two-fold knowledge appears here *distinguishable* as two-fold, but identical in such a sense as to be absolutely inseparable in the actual possession and enjoyment of

it. Mark this again, if there be any misgivings lurking in your hearts as to *who Christ is!* He can be no *creature*.

We might leave the subject here, seeing that to know the only true God, who sent his only-begotten Son, and yet to be ignorant of the Son whom he sent, is impossible, and the supposition therefore absurd. But, let me ask you, believer in Jesus, suppose, for a moment, that the knowledge of God, as above defined, was separately attainable; could your soul rest even in this blest fruition of the knowledge of the only true God, without an acquaintance with the Son whom the only true God sent for your soul's redemption, and through whom you would feel you came again into this divine and life-giving knowledge? The supposition is morally absurd. You would roam through the universe to seek Jesus, till you found him.

But not only is the knowledge of the Son "Jesus Christ" inseparable from that of the Father, but the former precedes the latter in the order of time, in the experience of the converted soul. So far as the higher spiritual influences in the experience of the Christian can be separately conceived, the divine economy recognizes the fact. Says Christ, "No man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." (John 6:44.) This drawing is the first step towards salvation, and anticipates the sinner's conversion *in time*, as God's sovereign counsel does from *eternity*. The sinner thus drawn comes to and is received by Christ, who saves all those whom the Father giveth him. This is the next step in the great work. "No man cometh to the Father but by me," says Christ. This is the third step. The sinner coming to the Father by Christ is received into the family of God, and God becomes his Father in Christ. Henceforth his fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ; and if, from this time onward, the Father

reveals to him who the Son is, and the Son who the Father is, it is but the *experimental carrying out* of the very words of Christ (v. 1), "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son may also glorify thee;" and the *practical side* of that reciprocity involving equality of character, of which I spoke in my last discourse, and which subsists between the Father and the Son. Here is wisdom !

But we return to the simpler question of the knowledge of Christ by itself considered. Being in character the same with the knowledge of "the only true God," and in existence inseparable from it, it is obvious that this knowledge also is one of spiritual experience, derived from real contact and actual occurrences. Indulge me once, if I resort to illustration.

Suppose you are a poor, abandoned, wicked outcast, without claims for mercy upon God or man; your vessel, by the raving hurricane dashed to shivers, has left you clinging to a board amid inaccessible rocks, and an angry sea rolls constantly over your head. None *can* save, and none, in fact, would be *willing* to save, such an one as *you* are. But the Sovereign's first-begotten stands on the shore. Owing to the matchless benevolence of his character, he *loves* you whom *nobody* loves, and pities you whom nobody pities. Kingdom, crown and life, are set aside; he leaps into the foaming deep, and, after toils untold, exhausted and with his body mangled and bleeding, he brings you safely to the shore. By irresistible though gentle means and influences, he turns your mind to the love of all that is good, induces his Father to adopt you as his child into the royal family, and to receive you to his palace and his table. Your daily intercourse is with the Prince, your two-fold deliverer, from a watery grave and from the thralldom of vile passions and soul-destroying iniquity ;



your fellowship with him is constant, intimate, and sweet, and the manifestations of his love to you, the purchase of his dying struggles, are repeated every moment. Live along thus one year, or two, or ten, or twenty, or fifty, and then let me ask you, "Do you know that prince?" Your glance at me through smiles and tears is all the answer you can give. Now change the terms, and put for the earthly prince the Prince of life, Jesus Christ, and ask the believer, "Do you know him?" Know him! Know him! O, ask no more! for human language has no words to frame an adequate reply. Know him! What an emphasis, what an import, the little word has! If words had souls, *this* word would soar on seraph's wings.

Thus here, as above, the knowledge spoken of is an *experimental knowledge*, the fruit of a *living connection, fellowship and intercourse with Christ*. It is, as above, a knowledge involving complacency, affection, and consequent harmony, being in its character transforming, controlling and guiding our actions, drawing us nearer to its divine object, and making us feel supremely happy while in his blessed nearness. This knowledge presupposes a renewal of heart and mind, and is in its beginning and progress, even to the end of it, a matter of *experimental* revelation from heaven. For his Father in heaven must reveal it unto us. "To whom is the arm of the Lord *revealed*?" asks Isaiah; and Paul answers, from his personal experience, "When it pleased God to *reveal* his Son in me," &c.

That such a knowledge of "the only true God," and of "Jesus Christ" whom he hath sent, should not merely procure, or give, but *be* "eternal life," is not strange. What should it be but *that*, and what should or could it give more than itself?

A few minutes more, and I have done.

Jesus said (v. 2) that he would give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him. From our text we have learned *what* that eternal life is. *The absence of it is eternal death.* Hear it, my unconverted hearers,—the absence of this knowledge is eternal death! You have a knowledge of God and of Christ, but it is the knowledge unto judgment, and unto that death which never dieth.

And, as you know God, so he knows you; not with that knowledge with which he knows his own. If you do not repent, he will, on that great day, call you workers of iniquity, and unroll before you the black register of your impenitent lives. The Searcher of hearts will know you most perfectly, as he knows all his enemies throughout his vast empire; but he will declare to you that he “never knew you” as his own. His last word to you will be, “Depart from me!”

But, behold, “eternal life” is still within your reach. In the name of Christ I offer it to you, beseeching you, in his stead, Be ye reconciled to God! I invite you, at his command, saying, Come, all things are ready! I will wash my hands before you; I will be innocent of your blood. Be warned, be entreated! As you return home, repair to your closets; give yourselves to Christ, and, cleaving to his promise, ask for that glorious knowledge of him and of his Father which is eternal life, and you will receive it.

### III.

#### THE FATHER MANIFESTED BY THE SON.

I have glorified thee on the earth : I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world : thine they were, and thou gavest them me ; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee : for I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me ; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. — JOHN 17 : 4—8.

IN the first four verses of this chapter we have listened to the beginning of an address made by Jesus to his Father who sent him, such as no creature can venture upon without being guilty of blasphemous presumption.

But as this matchless address to God began, so it continues unabated ; and the humble and despised Jesus soars like the royal eagle in highest air, lost in sunshine, and hardly perceptible to the traveller of the dust. Yet, what we *can* see of his majestic movements we *love* to see, for we love *him*,—and we *ought* to see it, for it concerns us to see it and to know it.

I will not detain you, my hearers, with introductory remarks. I beg leave to direct your minds to two topics chiefly ; but I shall not confine myself to them in such a way

as to lose sight of the important truths and facts which cluster around them.

I purpose to speak

I. OF THE ESSENTIAL MANIFESTATION ON EARTH OF THE FATHER BY THE SON.

II. EFFECTUALLY MADE TO BELIEVING MEN.

I. The address of Christ to his Father began on so high moral ground that none would have expected to see it rise to still more sublime and transcending realms of light. But hear !

“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” (John 17 : 5.) Speaking to his Father in the reverential yet confiding accents of the Son, who was from eternity, “in the bosom of the Father,” and “in the form of God,” but now, for man’s redemption, wore “the form of a servant” (Phil. 2 : 6, 7), he declares that he possessed and enjoyed *glory* with the Father, and that before so much as one creature was made ! This is not, therefore, the relative and dependent *glory of a creature*, but the glory of GOD, he being the only then existing being. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1 : 1, 14.) Proofs from the Scriptures of the absolute divinity of Christ might easily be adduced ; but our time is too limited, and I will suppose the sentiments of my hearers to be scriptural on this subject. But, if Christ was absolutely divine *from eternity*, then it follows that the glory he then possessed, and *now asks for*, is absolutely *divine glory*. It is also to be observed that he says, “And now, glorify thou me with



*thine own* self (an expression which is emphatic in the original), with the glory which I had with thee (here without emphasis) before the world was." And the language which Christ then, doubtless, used is perfectly capable of that emphasis, so that John may well be supposed to have given us a rendering of the prayer of Christ into Greek, not only substantially correct, but critically accurate, in this as in all other parts of it. Nor was this emphasis uncalled for by the circumstances. The Son stands before the Father, "made in the likeness of men," humbled into a slave (*δοῦλος*, Phil. 2: 7), and preparing to die the slave's ignominious death. And may he now,—this is the question,—thus *united to humanity*, ask again for *all* his former infinite and transcending glory which he had "with the Father"? Yes, he may, is the answer,—he does; hence the emphasis, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me *with thine own self*,"—that is, nothing less and nothing lower than with thine own self. I, Jesus, with soul and body, ask to be *glorified*. And so he was,—raised in human nature to the "own right hand" of the Father in heavenly places, far above *all* principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and *every name* that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1: 20, 21), "that at the name of Jesus (and this is the name of "God manifested in the flesh") every knee should bow" in heaven, earth and hell, and every tongue throughout the universe confess him Lord! (Phil. 2: 10, 11.)

And of *this* Jesus was conscious in that upper chamber, and for *this* he asks.

He says further to his heavenly Father, concerning himself, "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do," verse 4. "The work" which

the Father gave him to do, and by which — as we saw in meditating on verse 1 — the Father was to be glorified, was the whole work of redemption. This work Jesus pronounces here “finished,” and his Father’s name as thereby “glorified on the earth ” through the Son. Here the Son stands before the Father upon the sunny height of divine omniscience, where the past, the present and the future, are *one*. What was yet future in the progress of the events composing the history of redemption was between the Son and the Father “finished.”

A short time before, standing on humbler ground, Jesus said, “The hour is come,” and “now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour!” (John 12.) “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I *straitened* till it be accomplished!” (Luke 12: 50.) And an hour after the prayer contained in our chapter, prostrate in the garden he groans, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me!” — and again, “If this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done!” O, precious love! O, infinite compassion!

But here he speaks with divine dignity. Although the most terrific part of his atoning work was still before him, — was already *approaching*, and within his very sight, and it is then that hearts melt and fail, — he is so perfectly certain of his Father, and so perfectly certain of himself, that the completion of the dread work is as sure as God and heaven; it lies as an eternal reality between the two Divine Personages, real, immutable as the joint throne of both in glory, — “I *have* glorified thee on the earth; I *have* finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” This being the case, there existed, then, no further obstacle to the Son’s being glorified by the Father with his former divine glory, and that

as Mediator between God and man, as "the man Christ Jesus," verse 5.

We proceed. "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world," verse 6. That God was bearing a relation to the pious similar to that of a father unto his children, was revealed, and thus "manifested," under the *old* covenant, though not referred to as frequently nor as clearly as under the *new*. But we have not to do here with a revelation or manifestation couched in *words*, or illustrated in providential divine actions. Jesus does not speak here of a *comparatively clearer* manifestation of the paternal relation of God to the pious, but of a *positive* and *especial one*. Jesus speaks of that manifestation of God the Father which He, the Son, alone could make, in his *advent*, his *person*, and the *testimony* of his *whole being*, in the which was *beheld* the glory of the only-begotten of the *Father*, full of grace and truth. By the prophets was made to the people of God the *verbal* manifestation of his paternal name. By the *Son*, the *real, concrete, embodied* proof and presence of it was set forth to the church of the living God, for their present and actual fruition in Christ. The eternal Son, by his identifying himself with us through his participation in our nature, became to us who believe the real manifestation, and the manifest reality of the paternity, in Christ, of the Supreme Being, to those who are members of the body of his eternal and only-begotten Son. Hence the assurance of Jesus, "No man cometh to the Father, but through me." He is the only way and medium. To this all-important truth, and to the fact that this his relation to men continued after his resurrection and ascension, he refers in saying (John 20 : 17), "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." This is to say that by *his*

assumption of *their nature*, and by *their union with him*, by *faith*, Jesus and his people have made such an exchange, and entered into such a relation to one another, and are sharing each other's predicaments in such a manner, that — with the necessary limitations introduced by *his* character as the Eternal Son, and *theirs* as creatures — his Father has become their Father, and their God has become his God. And this is the *real* manifestation of the fathership of God to his people, made by and in Christ Jesus, and in none else.

II. This manifestation Jesus Christ made, and still does make, effectually to his own people. Here his blessed Spirit is the ever-present agent, supplying his visible presence effectually, till He and they meet in glory, to part no more forever.

“I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me,” verse 8. Having brought his people into this real *filiation* towards God, he gives, or transmits unto them also the “words” — not the “word” — which his Father gave him. The term rendered here by “words” signifies sentences, or sentiments, uttered; it is concrete in its nature, practical, familiar, and intimate in the connection in which it stands here.

All that the eternal God and Father ever spoke to man, or to any other creature in the universe, was spoken through that divinely personal Word by whom the worlds were made, and who, in the fulness of time, became flesh, and dwelt among us. When He came in bodily shape, how many blessed and “gracious words” did he not bring from heaven with him! Blot out what he brought down with him,—extinguish that “true light,” whose rays are not unfrequently reflected by the law and the prophets, even before he came, just as the morning twilight precedes the rising



sun,— and look, then, at those opaque bodies of the old covenant, and how dreary will they look ! Truly, HE gave us, both by his *coming* and his *speaking*, the “ words ” of the Father.

“ The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came (or, better, *became*, that is, came into existence) by Jesus Christ.” (John 1 : 17.) “ He that is of the earth,”— that is, earth-born *merely*, as Moses, the prophets, and John the Baptist, the greatest of them all,—“ he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth,” although the revelation of God be in his heart and in his mouth, when compared to him “ that cometh from heaven,” and who “ is above all,”—for Him “ God hath sent ” in a manner in which he sent none other ; and he “ speaketh the words of God ” as no one else ever did, for God gave not the Spirit by measure unto him, but without measure, and “ hath given *all things* into his hands,” so that “ he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” (John 2 : 31—36.) The words of the Father came unto us emphatically by Christ, and in this sense by him alone ; and hence it is that the reception or rejection of him decides upon the eternal destiny of the immortal soul, for glory or for ruin.

But the term “ words ” doubtless includes at the same time all those sweet secret manifestations of God to his children which constitute his paternal intercourse with them. All that they ever hear and learn of the Father, as to instruction, warning, consolation, assurance or triumph, all comes through the mediation of Christ. He includes it all here in the past sense, as he does his still impending sufferings and death. He *gave* them, and He *gives* these “ words ” to the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. Yes, let me utter it

with one word. In Christ *are* disclosed and *given* unto us who believe, essentially and really, all those paternal words, thoughts, feelings and purposes, which God cherishes in our several cases; and all these together are indeed the “words” of the *Father*, given by him to Christ, and by Christ to us. “I have given them the words which thou gavest me.”

“Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.” (verse 6.)

Christ has laid aside the character of creator, and speaks as mediator only. He speaks to the Father, who, in the work of the atonement, represents the entire Divinity, between whom and man he, “the man Christ Jesus,” stands in his mediatorial, reconciling office. Therefore he has now, acting thus officially, nothing to do with man’s creation. “Thine they were,” Lord God, who madest them moral and responsible beings, in thine own image and likeness; they fell, and thou becamest unto them “a consuming fire,” and “everlasting burning.” But there was a council and agreement between thee and me from eternity, “before the world was,” entered into by us while seated together in that united glory which I shall now share again with thee, bringing my adopted humanity with me into it. And then, lo! I came, in the volume of the book it was written of me. And as I came, and the mediatorial personage existed, thou having sworn by thyself that thou hast no pleasure in the death of the sinner, in the exercise of thine infinite divine benevolence “gavest them me.” This transaction is done. They *were* thine, the Creator’s; they *belonged* to the holy universal Sovereign, against whom they had rebelled, and from whom just and infinite wrath was ready to descend and to abide upon them, burning forever. Now they *are* mine, the *Mediator’s*, the *Redeemer’s*, who laid aside for them his glory, esteeming their salvation a more desirable object than the undisturbed

enjoyment of his own divine prerogatives. Now they belong to *me*, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world; to *me*, who am standing ready to pay the ransom of their souls with my life-blood!

Blessed sentiments, glorious truths, are these! Believers belong emphatically to Christ already now and forever; and his "work" for them is "finished," and can never be undone again. Repentance is hid from his eyes. The eternal decree, and the fact finished in time, are alike fixed and irrevocable.

No wonder if the revelation of Christ to these souls is *effectual*. He has "finished" a "work" *for* them which cannot but be carried out *in* them. That also is as good as "finished."

' And they have kept thy word.'—What could the finished work of redemption, and the most perfect transmission of the Father's "words," do for a soul who would not keep his word? And where is that soul that *would* keep it, if left alone? So important an influence and agency in the great question of our personal salvation could not be left to our own decision or management, unless the whole work of redemption, given by the Father to the Son to do, was to be worse than vain in every single instance, and the greatest failure, and the most useless waste of means, outstripping calculation, which the universe ever beheld.

Nor was this too responsible trust left to hands of clay, or to the resolution and the consistency of hearts beset with mighty and subtle foes within and without. No, *Christ* takes care of that. The phrase, "they have thy word," is but in a very small measure retrospective. *How little*, indeed, had his disciples kept, till then, of the Father's words! How little had they even understood them till then!



Yes, till then, when they were all ready to forsake Christ and to flee! How little did they know, after his death, of the connection, the cause and the consequences, of that event! They had not the remotest conception of it, considering all lost, irrecoverably and forever lost! The sentence is emphatically *prospective*, and thus agrees with other sentiments with which it is connected. Christ sees the end from the beginning; yea, he *determines* the end himself, and, engaging both for himself and for his people, insures the success of redemption, both on his part and on theirs; and down from this elevation and divine vantage-ground he says, "And they have kept thy word." As *his* part of the great work is sure, so is *theirs*; and that certainty stands upon the *same ground* of the counsel of his will and the operation of his Spirit and power, both in the divine *Head* and in the dependent *members*.

This keeping of the Father's word by believers is further characterized as manifesting itself *in them* by the production of a profound experimental *knowledge* of the divine origin of all that which the Father had given to the Son, and he again committed to them. The fact of the oneness of both in the work of redemption can be known by *perception* and actual experience. It can be felt that the work is equally worthy of both, demands the participation of both, and insures by its moral character the perfect harmony of both. It can be seen, by those who have eyes to see, that any supposition, different or contrary, is absurd, if God is God. It can be *known* that all the things which the Father gave to the Son are of him, and came out of the unexplored ocean of his absolute and infinite divine perfections. And this knowledge Christ ascribes to his own people; they possess it. They have, however, not learnt it of flesh and blood, not from



books nor from men, but from personal experience in divine things, and by the teachings of the spirit of grace.

And can we wonder if they receive gladly the "words" of the Father,—“and they have received them”? What should they *receive* rather than the divine communications from the bosom of their heavenly Father? All is precious to them, all dear, all sweet. “Thy words were found, and I did *eat* them,” they may exclaim. They are sweeter to them than honey and the honey-comb, more precious than thousands of gold and silver. And here also Christ engages to insure the result, considering well the waywardness of the human heart, and says, “And they *have received* them.” This settles the case forever in favor of every true believer.

The reception of these words in the manner described is to them the means of a growing knowledge of the *divine character of the Saviour*, and of his personal mission from the bosom of the Father into this sinful world. This truth, thus experimentally *known*, becomes the *central moral truth of the soul*. Falling in with the constant, clear and undeniable testimony on the subject of God's revealed Book, this experimental knowledge of the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh, receives confirmation from the Bible, and casts a bright refulgence upon every part of it in return. Proofs and reasonings for or against, from other sources than these two, Scripture and experience, are neither needed nor dreaded. Here is divine ground, and a kind and degree of certainty such as human science will always lack.

But this knowledge of believers concerning the divine character of Christ, and of his mission, is not the *opposite of faith*. Here *faith* and *knowledge* are akin to one another, and form the alternating steps of that scale of spiritual growth on which the sanctified human mind will reach

forward and upward, in eager, constant, glorious, eternal development,—faith leading to knowledge,—knowledge disposing for and calling to ever new exercises of faith. The mission of Christ from the bosom of the Father — the manifestation of God in the flesh — cannot be *perfectly known* till God is found out unto perfection, which will never be accomplished by a creature. There abideth, therefore, even in the other world, faith, hope and love,—these three; faith in all that which is not yet *known* to the expanding soul. But if this be the case *there*, how much more *here*; and how proper must it ever be for a moral agent of God's creation to exercise *faith and trust* in him from whom all his blissful knowledge was derived!

Thus the Lord's people approve themselves as *his*. They hear his voice; they keep his Father's word; they know, by experience, that all that Jesus brought from heaven flows from the ocean of God's perfections, and comes *through* Christ to them, while they gladly and gratefully receive the communications of God's paternal heart through the Spirit. They possess an experimental knowledge of the mystery of godliness,—God manifested in the flesh; their faith of all sacred truth yet to be received and learned by them rests quietly in the holy sovereignty of the wise and benevolent council of that unexplored sea of love which forms the Divine Being, of whom it is said, God is love, and from whom the eternal Son proceeding “came out” (v. 8) and “was made flesh;” “and we beheld his glory, a glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

A few remarks, and I have done.

1. If what we have contemplated is true, Christians are certainly “a *peculiar* people.” I look over the narrow path which Christians are travelling to heaven, and, behold, the

path has become very narrow, and little travelled ! O, what hopes will the last day sweep away ! what fond and confident expectations will it forever disappoint ! Let us examine our titles to heaven, lest we be deceived now, and discover the frightful illusion when it shall be forever too late !

2. Believers, behold the great Captain of your salvation, and remember what he said, and can you fear ? Fear not ! your salvation is *his* concern more than yours, and the joy in the Lord is intended to be your strength. “ Rejoice evermore ” “ in the hope of the glory of God.” You have divine leave and commission to that end. Make use of it, till you behold the pearly gates of New Jerusalem, and enter into the holy city to dwell with the Friend of your soul forever !

3. Sinners, see what privileges and blessings you reject ! Beware ! your conduct will one day prove fatal to your souls, and may prove so *this very day* ! I warn you ; flee to Him ! Be received among the number of his own, and in an instant your covenant with him is sealed in heaven ; he is yours, and will from henceforward effectually reveal to you the glory of his Father.

## I V.

### THE GREAT INTERCESSION.

I pray for them : I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine, And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name; those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. — JOHN 17 : 9—13.

THE first petition of Christ to his Father is to be glorified with the Father himself with the same divine glory which they enjoyed together, in perfect harmony and equal fulness, before the first dawn of creation. (v. 5.) The sovereign voice, Let there be light ! had not broken the eternal silence of that vast, black realm, which now, lit up with millions of suns, affords a transient chance of pleasing existence to successive generations of sensitive beings. The morning stars had not yet opened the enraptured eye to behold the glories of an illimitable sky, nor tuned their untried voices to the virgin hymn of creation. The suns and planets of the universe, the silver dust floating around the footstool of the infinite and eternal God, had not yet started on those revolu-



tions, so stupendous, so bewildering, to the most expanded and gigantic human intellect. God was — the I Am that I Am — in self-sufficient glory, and there was none else. But that God was not the isolated, desolate and barren *unite* of the Deist, but, according to Scripture, the Triune God,— the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, one God.

Three Persons in one God afforded the divine ground for the Father's contemplating his own infinite perfections in him who was the personal image of him, in the Spirit of both, and for the reciprocation of the contemplation by the Son. It afforded the ground for the *exchange* of affections infinite in holiness and power, and in corresponding bliss and glory, and for the communication of thoughts and purposes such as absolute divine wisdom and goodness would conceive and mature. Thus the love exercised in the Divine Mind before creation was not *self-love* or *self-approbation*, as the *original affection* of the Deist's God must ever be. This would *limit* and even *lower* the Divine Mind, and make God dependent, for the exercise of *real love*, upon the existence of his own creation. Not so the God of the Bible. He is *triune*, and thus possessed within his own divine nature of all that is necessary for the exercise of *real* moral affection, love, holy and higher far than *self-love*,— love for the perfections of a holy *object*. Such blissful converse, for the exercise of which the Three in One were divinely independent of any contemplated future creation, was the eternal glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

One God in three Persons afforded the divine ground of that perfect and indissoluble divine harmony and union, without which their most holy converse could not have been perfectly blissful, being subject to contingency and change. Had they been three persons in a creature sense, and still each

divine, they would not only have been three Gods, but also three between whom there was conceivable a difference, and consequent separation of purpose. But this divine and eternal harmony, union, yea, oneness, existed really, and ever will exist, in the unchangeable divine Being; and whatever delightful peace and melting intimacy, cemented by holiest affection and united purpose, could be spread over the infinite and eternal Mind, all that rolled in an ocean of glory there, eternally, as the necessary result of the oneness of the Three, — the glory from all eternity past, not one creature yet existing, — the glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, — one God.

And, for the return to this glory, the Son, clothed in human flesh, asked when the work of redemption through his blood should be completed; and this was to be done no less to the glory of the Father himself, as effected in the divine reciprocation by the Son, than to the glory of the Son himself.

After this retrospect, we turn to our text. With the beginning of it the prayer of Christ turns to his disciples, — to the eleven preëminently, and with them to all those who were to be entitled to the name of disciples, to the end of time.

In contemplating the great intercession of Christ for his disciples, as far as our text exhibits it, I propose to speak

- I. OF HIS PLEA FOR IT.
- II. OF THE OCCASION OF IT.
- III. OF ITS CONTENTS.
- IV. OF ITS OBJECT.

I. The plea Christ offers for praying in such a particular manner for his disciples is two-fold. (1.) "For they are thine;" and (2), "I am glorified in them." (vs. 9, 10.)

“For they are thine.”—In verse six, Christ says, “Thine they *were*, and thou gavest them me.” Here,—“They *are* thine.” Christ, speaking here simply as mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, says, They *were* thine by right of creation and preservation; they fell into sin, and thou gavest them me for the purpose of redemption. I *have* redeemed them as God manifested in the flesh, and have reconciled them unto thee, their Father and my Father; and now, they being mine by right of redemption, are also thine through that oneness of our divine nature, upon the ground of which “all mine are thine, and thine are mine.” (v. 10.)

“I am glorified in them” is the second part of the plea. My saving power, as the Redeemer of men, he says, has been manifested *in them*, and dwells and works *in their hearts*. They are, and ever will be, trophies of my vicarious death; gems in my crown, as the Redeemer of the world.

You notice that here, as in former instances, Christ speaks of the past, the present, and the future, *in one tense*. All is *done* with him. Redemption is finished; in virtue of it believers are already the Father’s children in Christ; He is glorified already in them. Thus he insures the success of his redemption both *for* them and *in* them.

This two-fold plea, “they are thine,” and “I am glorified in them,” when it was presented by Christ to the Father, was found true and valid, and proved acceptable to the Paternal heart, according to the measure (if a *measure* it may be called) of the Father’s complacency in his only-begotten, full of grace and truth, in whom he had *all* his pleasure.

“I pray for them,” says Jesus. And will the Father say nay, and turn away his face, and let them perish,—even the least, the weakest of them? The thought is preposterous,

and blasphemous. The eternal throne is no more unmovable than the true believer's salvation.

II. But there is a particular *occasion* for his offering up such a prayer, just at this period,—a period unique in the history of the universe. To this occasion he alludes by saying, “And I come unto thee.”

I do not presume to search into all the mysteries of redemption, into which angels desire to look. Secret things belong unto God; unto us, things revealed. The history of redemption has a beginning and an end; has its periods, changes, intervals, contest and victories, lights and shades. This is plain, although the divine reasons, the causes, and the connections of these various changes, are often impenetrable to us. The time had now come, in the progress of divinely-appointed events, when Christ was *no longer* to be bodily present with his disciples. Indeed, the time of his bodily presence had *already virtually closed*. “And now I am *no more* in the world,” he says, “but these are in the world.” Again, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, that Comforter who was and is to take the place of Christ, in a certain sense, with his disciples, and abide with them till his second coming,—that outpouring could *not yet* take place. It was necessary that Christ should first ascend to heaven, enter as the Eternal High Priest into the Holy of holies there, through his own blood, and obtain eternal redemption for us; and then, as King of kings, and Lord of lords, and Lord of angels, sit down at the right hand of the Father, and thus *himself* “shed forth this which ye now see and hear.” Between these two points of time, however, there was an interval, during which the disciples would have been left desolate orphans,—well-nigh “without God in the world,”—and in what a world, and at what a period of it! When that



“hour” of “the power of darkness” was at hand, in which Christ himself, perspiring clear blood, writhed in anguish on the ground, and groaned out his feelings of desertion on the accursed tree ; when all hell was let loose ; when the powers of the pit shouted, and the angels of peace wept, and all nature mourned and trembled ; when every spark of hope was carried to the tomb with the cold, pale corpse of the beloved friend of sinners, and many an almost despairing believer was ready to seek death, because the last ray of salvation died, as the blessed eyes of Jesus closed upon this vale of tears !

At this eventful period,—the very hinge upon which the world’s salvation, and the existence of the church, was to turn, by divine appointment,—at this period the disciples were not to be left alone ; and, therefore, Christ commits them to the *particular* and *extraordinary* keeping of the Father, whose relation to *him* he turns to *their* special benefit, in this trying emergency. “Holy Father, keep through thy own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.” They *were* scattered, every one unto his own ; but their bond of union in Christ was not broken, for this would have been the lasting dissolution of the church of Christ ; and this bond was preserved, because Christ had prayed “that they may be one, as we are.”

“Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given unto me ;” that is, as the presence of the Son is *no more* available unto them, and the communion of the Spirit *not yet*, take thou, Holy Father, the special charge of these scattered sheep ; and, in the exercise of those holy *paternal affections* which thou hast towards *me*, and *through me* towards *them*,—which holy and benign affections constitute thy name as “Holy Father,”—preserve

them from despair, disaffection, separation, and every snare and peril with which they must meet, till the Sun of righteousness shall rise again on the third day, with healing in his wings !

This was a great transaction between Christ and his Father in heaven; and the consolation flowing from it for every Christian is, that he can never be severed from the special care, guidance and protection, of the Triune God.

III. The contents of the prayer, or the particular blessing prayed for, we find in the words already alluded to, "that they may be one, as we are one." Another time, when, God pleasing, we shall meditate on the verses twentieth to twenty-third of our chapter, I shall have to speak more fully on the character and the extent of Christian union, according to the intention and the prayer of Christ. Here we may, therefore, confine ourselves to the narrower limits indicated by the particular circumstances of the eleven disciples, and other believers, at that time. These circumstances would give to the petition of Christ on their behalf the extent, that they should be kept in their attachment to Christ, and in brotherly love towards one another. The cases of Peter and of Thomas are particularly suited to show the character of the *temptations* under which they would all have perished inevitably, had they been left to themselves. To deny Christ with oaths and imprecations, like Peter; or to tear away from the brethren, give up all for lost, plunge into scepticism, and deny credit to the predictions of Christ, and to the true and honest testimony of men and angels, like Thomas; this, and much more, too, would have proved their common ruin, and the destruction of the entire economy of grace. But let them be kept *one with Christ*, and *one with each other in him*, and all

is safe. And for this great object Christ prayed, and *was heard*.

In connection with this sentiment, we read also this remarkable — yes, this astounding declaration of Christ: “While I was with them in the world, *I* kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I *have* kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled.” A work which he can intrust to no angel or archangel,—indeed, to none save to the “Holy Father,”—he says HE DID it while he was with his disciples! And here he does not humbly recognize the assistance of his Father, in this work of spiritual guardianship. This assistance does not appear to have been needed. The work of the Holy Spirit is not alluded to, neither; for the Spirit was not yet given, Jesus not being glorified yet. In fact, Christ expressly distinguishes between his guardianship over his disciples and that of his Father. While he was with them in the world, *he kept* them in the exercise of powers which were sufficient for the purpose, and over which he had the adequate control. Yes, and if Judas Iscariot was not kept, this happened so, Christ testifies, not because he, Christ, could not have kept him also, but, as he expressly says, because he *was* the son of perdition, in whom God determined “to show wrath and make his power known.”

What mere creature, in heaven or on earth, could ever use such language as this, and not be struck down to the stones of the pit by the lightning of God’s righteous vengeance! But Jesus of Nazareth says it, quietly, humbly, in prayer, directly addressing the “Holy Father” in heaven, and that in the solemn view of approaching sufferings and death. Nor does he even appear like one who is conscious of saying something extraordinary; on the contrary, all this is uttered as a

matter familiar to the mind of the speaker, and readily admitted on the other side. Surely, if Christ is not God over all and blessed forever, say, infidel, who or what is he !

IV. The *object* of the prayer of Christ for his disciples, as indicated in our text, is stated by himself in verse 13, —“ That they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.”

Within a few minutes from the time when this sentiment was uttered, he said, “ These things I have spoken unto you that *my* joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” (15 : 11.) He promised them, “ Your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you ” (16 : 22), and encouraged them henceforth to ask or pray in his name, that they might receive, that their joy might be full. (v. 24.) In taking leave of them he gave *his* peace unto them, and promised them still further his Spirit as their *Comforter*. And here he prays “ that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.” This is the *object* of his prayer ; and what rich and gracious provisions are these which the dying Saviour thus made for the comfort and the perseverance and the preservation of his outwardly deserted saints !

It is his express and prayed-for object and desire, that his disciples should have joy, that that joy should be *his* joy, and that it should dwell in them *fully*, or be adequate and perfect for its intended purpose ; and that it should be *permanent*.

There is room, there is strong inducement here, for meditation, wherever we turn ; but I must hasten to the close.

The joy of Christ, poured into the soul by him, is none other but the *joy of his salvation*, for which David prayed so fervently in anticipation. It is *perfect* in *kind*, and reaches forward to whatever *degree* of perfection may be realized by



a finite being; and it is *permanent*, enduring forever. It is the joy of conscious freedom from sin, which freedom is at once *perfect in Christ before God*, and is progressively inwrought into the soul by the indwelling Spirit and grace of God in Christ. Where darkness reigns there is no light, and where sin reigns there can be no *joy*. Joy begins to dawn with rosy hue as soon as the power of sin is broken. The beginning of freedom from sin, through and in Christ, is joy; the end of it, celestial bliss, an eternal weight of glory. This joy of Christ is the joy of perfect pardon and reconciliation with God. No cure from sin could avail, if there were left an unpardoned sin upon the soul. But a renewed state of heart and an unpardoned sin cannot coëxist. Now think of a sin-burdened soul that is all at once made to feel that she has no more sin to answer for,—that all is pardoned, and merged in oblivion forever! What joy, what transport, what peace, what overflowing comfort, must that soul feel! The joy of Christ is the joy of fellowship with him. “Whom have I in heaven but thee?” It is the joy of fellowship with his people, and “sweet,” indeed, “is the tie that binds their hearts in Christian love!” It is the joy of doing all things for him. Man is created active, and to work makes him happier than inactivity does. But to work for any one or anything in the universe less and lower than *God* leaves him still toiling amid the thorns and thistles of the accursed ground. *To work for God* solves the great problem of man’s eternal activity. Here labor, hardship, peril, pain and death,—all is joy, true joy, leading on directly to the holy employments of heaven.

That a joy like this is perfect in *kind*, reaching forward to perfection in *degree* and will, and must *last forever*, I need not repeat, much less prove. A female hero in the faith, a

lady of high distinction and extensive influence in France, said, "What is not *eternal* I do not fear." Well said! I add, What is not eternal I do not want! Let me possess Christ, and let temporal things be "added" unto me for my *necessity*,—not for my *gratification*, much less *satisfaction*.

I close with a few remarks.

"None of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled." False disciples, who either seek the world under pretence of piety, like Judas Iscariot, or would follow Christ *and* the world, like Ananias and Sapphira, Simon Magus and Demas, are excluded. Mark this, ye — if there be any such here — who profess godliness, talk about religion, and follow the pleasures of the world, and please worldly men. Worldlings are excluded. "I pray not for the world." As the friend of men, of sinners, he may often have prayed and wept secretly for their conversion; but when he speaks as High Priest, as the only-begotten of the Father, whose very petitions are sovereign, carrying with them divine authority and creative power, he does not, he cannot, pray for the world. Hear this, unconverted sinner, and tremble! You are excluded. It is not the will of Christ, nor of the Father, that you should be saved as you are. You must turn or perish. And, if you perish at last, the compassionate Saviour who died for you will not have so much as a word of sympathy or of intercession for you. He had it not while on earth; he will not have it in glory. *Now* is the accepted time! *Now* is the day of salvation!

## V.

### THE SOLEMN AND RESPONSIBLE RELATION.

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth : thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. — JOHN 17 : 16—19.

WE have listened to the prayer of Christ for his disciples as far as it extended in the verses ninth to fifteenth of this chapter. Before proceeding to his further petitions on their behalf, our Saviour defines the *position* of his people while they are sojourning here below. "They are not *of* the world," he said ; and yet they are *in* it, and continue in it, while he returns into glory. "These are in the world, and I come unto thee." (v. 11.) A difficult position, indeed, is indicated by these three considerations. But the mention of his bodily separation from them leads him now to allude to their *inward* connection with him, their invisible glorified Saviour ; and this involves their connection *in him* with the *Father*, of whom he now asks for those heavenly gifts and graces for which their relation to the world and to heaven obviously call. We need no further introduction, but may at once take into view *the solemn and responsible relations which the disciples of Christ sustain while here below.*

I. THEIR RELATIONS TO THE WORLD AND TO CHRIST.

II. THE RESOURCES OF GRACE AND STRENGTH THEY HAVE TO SUSTAIN BOTH.

I. (1.) The position of the disciples of Christ over against the world their divine Master first defines by saying, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." They are *in* the world, but not *of* it. What it is to be of the world might be illustrated by a variety of passages from the Scriptures. But we need not go beyond our text. Christ has chosen to draw between himself and his disciples a close parallel on the question in hand. They are not of the world, even *as he* is not of the world. His own *personal* relation to the world is to define *their* relation to it. We need no further comparison of Scripture texts, no parallel passages.

Said Christ to the Jews, "Ye are from beneath, I am from above; ye are of this world, I am not of this world." (John 8: 23.) And are his disciples also "not of this world," but "from above"? After making due allowance of the difference between him who was, from all eternity past, "God over all and blessed forever," and us creatures of yesterday, I answer, Yes. Christians are "not of this world," but "from above," in a far higher sense than is generally realized among them. For —

(a.) Their very birth into the kingdom of Christ is "not of this world," — not of any earthly agency whatever. They are born, not of the will of man, or of any earthly means, but "of God." (John 1: 13.) That which makes them disciples — and it is with this that we have to do — is from heaven.

True, there is an important and undoubted connection between the new birth and the outward divinely appointed



means. The word of truth in the sanctuary, extraordinary and concentrated revival measures, the Sabbath, Christian education, the example, prayer and faith of pious parents and of the church, the covenant between God and his children, extending to their offspring, the promises of God pleaded by believing parents when offering their child to him in baptism, mercies, afflictions, and whatever other means or influences can be brought to bear upon the conversion of the soul,—all these are readily acknowledged to be real means to the end. Still, none of them is vested in itself with regenerating or converting power. All of them combined do not embody that power,—unnumbered cases prove the assertion; no accumulation of such means, no concentration of their united power and agency, can turn a soul from darkness to light, or from the power of Satan unto God. To do this, to renew the heart, is the office of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. He that created us must create us anew. The Christian, *as such*, is strictly a new *creature*.

“The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath begotten us again,” Peter confidently asserts. (1 Pet. 1 : 3.) Believers “are born of God,” and more particularly of him who has sent his Son into the world. (John 1 : 13, and 1 John 3 : 8 and 9.) The Holy Spirit has an agency in their regeneration as direct as that of God the Father. Christ says, in the plainest possible terms, that they are “born” “of the Spirit” (John 3 : 5), and are therefore, just so far as they *are* born again, spirit; that is, spiritual in their nature, and not of any carnal or human agency, so as to belong to the range of secondary and simple instrumental cause and effect. The Spirit of God is their cause by a spiritually renewing agency. An equally positive and personal agency in the work of regeneration has the only-begotten of the

Father. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." (John 12: 24.) "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see seed" (Is. 53: 10) a spiritual, regenerated posterity. His atoning death having taken place, his blessed name should "generate," or rather regenerate, a countless posterity (Ps. 72: 17, Hebrew text), his *death* being the divine power to bring souls to him. (John 12: 32.) Again, Peter maintains that "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath born us again by the *resurrection* of Jesus Christ from the dead." Here the resurrection is conceived as embodying and securing, as the efficient cause in the hand of God, the new birth, the resurrection to newness of life of all the members of the body of Christ. Thus Jesus is most immediately and intimately concerned in the regeneration of his people. His death, aside from its character as an atonement for sin, embodies and secures the *death to sin* of all believers, towards a *new life* and preparatory to it, just as the death of the grain of wheat precedes and produces the living plant. The death of Christ forms the central attraction, drawing into its own blessed fellowship his whole body. It is the moral, or, better, divine power, by which his people are made both willing and able to be crucified with him, to die with him. And thus, in losing their lives, they gain them; for his resurrection from the dead embodies and secures the new life of every member, in view of which life each is called "a new creature," or creation. And thus the *experimental* reality of the death and the resurrection of Christ is carried out throughout the true church of Christ, and every member feels with wonder and delight the divine vitality of his entire atonement, as carried by thousand veins and nerves to the furthest extremities.

Thus he sees seed, sprung from himself after his soul was made an offering for sin. Thus his *name*, the embodiment of all that he is, and of all that he did for us, "generates" an uncounted posterity of renewed souls, and saints "made perfect" in him.

(*b.*) And, as their birth is, so is their entire growth into the divine life. As there are divinely appointed means in connection with which it pleases God to effect the regeneration of the soul, while still He remains the only efficient cause and spring of the new life, so there are like means of sanctification, and, notwithstanding, the only efficient sanctifying power remains vested in God. No means of grace can of itself nourish and perfect the new life of the believer. It is that life which draws strength from the appointed means of grace, just as the spark of physical life seizes upon the offered nutriment, and converts it into the body which it animates. The means of grace for sanctification are real but *passive* means; the divine life is the *active* principle, depending for its continuance upon its divine spring and origin. The branch, once cut from the great *Vine*, withers hopelessly amid the genial influences of the combined *means*; no rain, no sunshine, will save it. But those that abide in him, in virtue of their permanent living connection with Christ, "grow up *into* him in all things" (Eph. 4 : 19); and the end of it is, that at last they "all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ (verse 13). They live no more *themselves*, as mere copies of an earthly race of responsible beings. *Christ Jesus liveth in them.* They share his divine life, and have become members of his body to eternal ages. Their life is concentric with his life, in a true and eternal fellowship with him who is the Head of the



church. In glory they will be "the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1 : 23.)

Truly, men thus characterized by the Scriptures are "not of this world."

(c.) And the kingdom to which they belong has their supreme affections. They "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." They set their affections "on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3 : 1, 2). They "are dead, and their life is hid with Christ in God" (verse 3). Not that they have already fully attained unto it, or were already perfect. But, being apprehended by Christ for this glorious object, they know that the attainment is divinely insured, and thus they feel confident and cheerful to "follow after" it, to pursue it to their last breath. And, where our affections are, there we may expect to find our springs of enjoyment, and our motives for action. Consequently, if a man be a Christian, his affections, the springs of his happiness and his motives, all are "not of *this* world,"—not carnal, earthly, selfish, but spiritual, holy, heavenly. True, in all this he has to sustain a life-long contest against inbred sin. His spiritual life is a living process, a development, a race, a fight. Perfection, triumph and rest, are in prospect before him. But, whatever aberrations the attraction of neighboring bodies may occasion in his course, the centre around which he moves is Christ, the Sun of the spiritual universe; and *his* attraction, superior to all other, secures the permanent relation of each believing soul to him, and restores each to his proper orbit again, whenever any deviation has taken place. This inward position of the soul necessarily controls the outward life of the believer, identifies it before God with the life of Christ, and thus gives it its appropriate character, as a life of faith in him.



(2.) To these disciples, who are “not of this world,” Christ has given the Word of the Father,—now not “words” (verse 8), but the Word, the great Divine message to a perishing world. It is the Word “concerning his Son.” He who is the eternal creative and all-sustaining Word is also the centre and the summit of all revelation. Take Christ out of the Bible, and the sun out of the firmament, and eternal death settles upon body and soul alike,—the world is a chaos, revelation a flash of lightning, and God a consuming fire. Christ is the flame upon the golden candlestick of the Sacred Book, and the Word concerning Christ the essence of Holy Writ. With this word in their hearts and on their tongues, they bear, within the scale of their calling, the same relation to him which he bears in *his* calling to his Father. In some important respects they sustain the same relation to the world, also, which Christ does. Being ambassadors *for Christ*, God beseeches *by them*, while they pray sinners, *in Christ’s* stead, to be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5 : 20); and their intercessions for a perishing world, and their self-denials and sacrifices for its salvation, are the participation of the members of his body in the great work of Christ, according to the measure allowed them in the dispensation of divine grace, for the glory of the sovereign bestower of this inestimable privilege.

(3.) Another characteristic feature in their relation to the world is this,—that, although their message to the world is one of benevolence and self-sacrifice, “the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world” (verse 14). In this they resemble their Master; and they share his fate, as far as the world can accomplish it. If the world love at all, they love their own, and every worldly man chiefly and supremely himself. (John 15 : 19.) This is Paul’s opinion,

who will not allow the mutual love of the world to bear this heavenly name. "We ourselves, also," says he, "were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in *malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.*" (Titus 3 : 3.) Here Paul allows no *real love* to the unregenerate soul. Still there are affections in the natural heart of man, and, such as they are, they go out towards those who are of a kindred character ; and this is now generally called love and friendship. Now, will those natural affections be extended to the disciples of Christ, *as such* ? No. As persons of information, of moral worth, of an amiable natural disposition, as relatives or as benefactors, they may be esteemed and loved. But, let their religious sentiments and principles cross the path of the world, disturbing carnal ease, condemning carnal pleasures, or calling into question the lofty claims of self-righteousness ; let them proclaim and enforce the terms of salvation, urge the claims of the divine law, and present for imitation the example of Christ ; let them refuse to join in what is,— refuse for conscience's sake, for Christ's sake, and because the Gospel will not permit it,— and instantly the hatred of the world finds utterance, be it in curses or in sneers, in the coarse outburst of laughter, or in the smile of wounded pride. To be loved of the world, as worldly men are, is utterly incompatible with Christian consistency, however modestly maintained. Christ and Belial never go together.

(4.) Christ has sent his disciples into the world, and the commission he thus gave them rests upon a solemn transaction in heaven, by which every gift and power is covenanted and secured to them which may be needed for the discharge of their duty. Christ says (verse 19), " And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through

the truth." A few sentiments from the Epistles will set this passage into a clear and important light.

Christ is entered into heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God for us (Heb. 9 : 24), entering into that *within* the veil, and sitting down at the right of the Father, made an High Priest forever, after the order of Melchisedek (6 : 19, 20 and 1 : 13). He ascended up on high, leading captivity captive ; entered by his own blood, once for all, into the holy place ; offered up himself, through the Eternal Spirit, and without spot, unto God ; obtained eternal redemption, purged our consciences from dead works to serve the living God (9 : 12 and 14), and from henceforward he gave gifts to men, to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, &c. (Eph. 4 : 8 and 11). Thus he consecrated himself as the eternal High Priest of his people, and "for their sakes" received the treasures of grace, pours out his Holy Spirit, and imparts to each disciple the particular gift needed for his respective duties, and is with them alway, even unto the end of the world. He is the spiritual Rock in the midst of the sacred camp of the church militant. From his bosom gushes the fountain of life, and out of his fulness each takes, daily and hourly, "grace for grace."

II. Their resources of grace and strength to sustain the disciples of Christ have already been indicated incidentally. They are great, and they ought to be so. The relation of the disciples to Christ involves a responsibility for which no man is sufficient, and their relation to the world places them into the most difficult and adverse position. But the intercession of Christ for them has made them infinitely rich in grace, and strong in him, however little the believer may, at times, be able to make this, his spiritual property, available to himself at the moment.



Look at these intercessions.

Christ first asks that his true disciples may be kept from the evil or the wicked one. To this reference was made in my last discourse. But this, while amply sufficient for their own *salvation*, was no adequate provision of grace for their *work*. Therefore he adds, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth." (v. 17.) To sanctify is to consecrate. Christ, who has consecrated himself for their sakes, has a right to ask that the *object* of his consecration, as the eternal High Priest of his people, should be accomplished, and that the Father should glorify the Son by his active coöperation. Before he himself should enter, through his own blood, into the upper sanctuary an High Priest forever, his Father is already to commence the work of their consecration for their great work. "Sanctify them *in* thy truth" is the *literal* rendering of this passage, which deserves the careful reader's attention. They who are true disciples of Christ live and move in the word of truth, as in their element. They breathe it. This element, like all the means of grace, has a sanctifying tendency; and if, by the agency of *God*, that power of the word be felt, the effect is produced, and perfect success is divinely certain, all human corruption and perverseness to the contrary, notwithstanding.

What the Father begins by anticipation, and at an extraordinary period and juncture of the divine economy, Christ carries forward and completes, in the regular exercise of his office as Mediator between God and man, and as High Priest forever after the order of Melchisedek. With his uplifted hands,—those hands which were once nailed to the accursed tree for sinners, but are now in possession of all power in heaven and on earth, and full of the exhaustless treasures of grace,—he will consecrate every disciple for his responsibili-



ties and duties as a Christian, warranting, by his high-priestly office and authority, the sufficiency of the consecration, and insuring, by his sovereign power and government, the full efficiency of the great transaction, and the fruit of it in the salvation of every soul thus set apart by himself for his service here below, and for glory above the skies.

The consecration of converted souls for the service of God being thus the joint work of the Father and the Son, these souls are in possession of resources sufficient for *any* purpose. And that possession cannot fail, or be alienated. Their connection with the treasures of heaven is *a regular one*, through the High Priest of the Holy of holies in heaven. Their participation in heavenly gifts may indeed be considered contingent, and depending upon, or rather connected with, their readiness to receive. But the cause and the effect, the condition of receiving the gift and the bestowment of it, are forming but so many parts of the scheme of salvation, and the whole rests in the hand of Christ.

And it was the will of Christ that this great fact should be known to his people, and therefore he makes it known to them. But the manifestation of the fact is not the only reason why Jesus speaks to his Father concerning the sanctification of his saints. It was, indeed, important that these should know upon what high ground their sanctification rests, and thus have an unwavering assurance in the hour of trial; but the *chief* reason must, I think, be sought in the *importance* of the subject itself. The sanctification of his saints was considered a subject of such magnitude as to deserve a place in this prayer, and to be made at this solemn season a matter of audible transaction and agreement between the Father and the Son.

As already observed, the sanctification of the disciples of

Christ, by the coöperation of the Father and the Son, is to be accomplished within the all-pervading element of his Word and truth, whose contents, made plain, quick and powerful, to them, by the divine spirit, supply to the believers' living breath the congenial atmosphere, to the hungry soul the hidden manna, to the longing spirit the living waters, and all that by the constant presentation to the soul of him who is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, the Rock of salvation, from whose bosom bursts the river of eternal life.

Surrounded and penetrated by agencies, powers and influences, like these, the believing soul may look with confidence upon her solemn and responsible position in this world. The believer is not allowed to doubt of his success, or rather that of Christ, nor to tremble in view of his own weakness. That weakness is permitted, not to make the promise of God or his purpose of none effect, but to make the strength of God *perfect in it*.

Many are the practical truths which cluster around this subject. But time fails, and I must close, hoping and praying that the truths presented may, by the divine blessing, do their own work in your souls, whatever your respective position and spiritual need may be. May the salvation of our souls, the crowning effect of God's greatest work, namely, his manifestation in the flesh, glorify him forever ! Amen.

## VI.

### THE BOND OF PERFECTNESS.

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word ; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us : that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me. — JOHN 17 : 20—23.

WE now enter upon the last part — and quite a distinct one it is — of our chapter. It is the one which most *directly* concerns every one of us who believes in Christ. It is as personal in its bearings upon us individually as it *can* be without mentioning our names. Surely it ought to interest us, and to engage our most solemn attention.

I propose to speak

I. OF “THE BOND OF PERFECTNESS.”

II. ITS OBJECT AND ITS REWARD.

I. In the part of this chapter preceding our text, Christ seems to have a two-fold object in view. His most direct and most frequent reference appears to be to his disciples *then* living, whom he was about to leave, for a season, in the most melancholy and spiritually dangerous situation. Still, he also speaks of those *whom the Father had given him*, and that

cannot be limited to the believers of any generation. Besides, what Christ says concerning his more immediate disciples at that time is applicable to *all* disciples at *all* times, due allowance being made for differences in circumstances. But *now* Christ *professedly* and *expressly* extends his glorious intercessions to *all believers in every age*. With more particular reference to his immediate disciples then living, he had said, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are." (v. 11.) *Now* he encircles his whole spiritual church in the arms of his love, and lifting them up to heaven upon the hands of his potent high-priestly intercession, he says, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be *one*, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." (vs. 20, 21.) This transcending union or oneness in the Father and the Son finds its expression and outlet in the exercise of that peculiar affection of all true believers towards one another, "brotherly love," which Paul calls "the bond of perfectness" (Col. 3: 14), and which, in the opinion of John, enables them to lay down their very lives for one another. (1 John 3: 16.) This bond of perfectness is, however, not so much an *exercise* as it is a *gift* which every true believer receives from Christ.

But, before we proceed, let it be deeply impressed upon our hearts that no believer, in any age or portion of this world, is excluded from the *most direct relation to Christ, the great High Priest*. Whatever be his situation, his need, his temptations, his doubts, his fears, the consolation that Christ interceded for him *personally* and *directly*, in the most solemn hour of his earthly career, can never fail him. In that solemn hour and in that matchless prayer he united the



sovereign "will" of the Eternal Son to the meritorious intercessions of "the man Christ Jesus," in behalf of all those who, throughout all ages, become the objects of his high-priestly office and his pastoral care, in order to secure to them, with infallible certainty, those spiritual gifts which infinite benevolence has destined for the elect, for whom a boundless ransom and purchase-price was paid in the blood of the only-begotten of the Father.

Christ sustains a universal relation to all believers, and a particular and personal one to each one of them. This our text teaches, and the propriety and the bearings of this important fact are sufficiently obvious. The *universality* of his relation to *all* is demanded by the extent of man's fall, and provided for by the divine character of Christ, which knows no distance of time or place, and needs no medium of communication. The *particularity* of his relation to *each* is demanded by the wants of the individual believer, and provided for in his *humanity*, in his real, personal, divinely-human affection for the believer (affection being *particular* from its very nature), and in the close brotherhood into which he *has* entered with each one of them, enabling him to be touched with *our* infirmities,—that is, with thine and mine. Let no man, no angel, then, step *between* Christ and our souls !

To this close and precious relation to Christ the believer is entitled by his *faith simply*, without any reference to his proficiency in the divine life (v. 20). They are permitted to avail themselves by *simple faith* freely of the intercession of Christ ; and experience will show them that by doing so they will profit more than by all their resolutions and struggles for higher attainments in the divine life.

There is a *gift* accompanying the intercession of Christ

which is to be realized by the believer, and thus rendered available to him in and through his believing acceptance of the Saviour's great prayer for him. "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them." He has put his own *received* glory upon his beloved people. To appreciate the import of the term "glory," in this place, we must not compare passages where it means approbation and honor (John 5: 41, 44); nor where its meaning is, either the manifestation of the divine power (11: 4, 40), or the state of celestial bliss (v. 5 of our chapter); but we may with safety look to John 1: 14. — "And we beheld his *glory*, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." This seems to be preëminently the glory which the Father gave unto the Son on earth, and which Christ chooses to give to his people to *behold*, to possess, and to enjoy forever.

This glory of Christ contains a *fulness of grace*, and a *fulness of truth*. The fulness of grace insures to the believer the *free, perfect* and *eternal* pardon of *all his sins*; his deliverance from and victory over Satan, and the world, and the flesh; the eventually entire sanctification of body, soul and spirit; perseverance to the end, and an abundant entrance into the glory of Christ's eternal kingdom. It insures to him that free access to his *gracious person* — for he is *personally* full of grace — which, being *free*, is alike available to *all*; to the weakest, poorest, most ignorant, most disheartened, discouraged, distracted, harassed, mourning, weeping,—yes, almost despairing of his believers. There is no hour of anguish, or of thickest darkness, when the believer may not, *should* not, drag himself to the feet of Him into whose arms he used to fly on eagles' wings, in the raptures of his first love. He is alike accepted and blest in either case.

The *fulness of truth* which the glory of Christ contains is that eternal and unfailing *certainty*, both of his *work* and of his *testimony concerning* it, which permitted him in our chapter, and in many other places, to speak of the particulars of his work then still future as of the *past*; and which enables the believer, yea, obliges him, notwithstanding all his doubts and fears, to admit his own salvation—though *impossible* on any conceivable human or angelic ground—to be not only possible, but true and real, and even irrevocably certain, in view of the work and the testimony of Christ, who cannot fail in his work, nor lie in his word; and in which word and work the believer believes with humble gratitude, and inward peace and joy. Thus the incredibility of our salvation is turned into the undoubted certainty of it, because He that is full of grace and truth said *believers shall be saved*.

This glory Christ gave to his disciples; and by it their personal salvation is wrought, against ten thousand opposing powers. Their needful spiritual comfort and assurance are provided for; all their occasional or even frequent doubts and fears to the contrary, notwithstanding. And the object of this *gift* is the same with that of the *intercession* of Christ, “that they may be one” (v. 22).

Christ has prayed that his disciples may be one, and *that* here below, “that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me” (v. 23). And, to realize this great object, he has given unto them the glory which the Father gave him. Now, this union, or oneness, he characterizes by saying, “that they *all* may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be *one in us* ;” “that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in



one" (vs. 21—23). These expressions are strong and deep, and the inquiry in what sense are they to be *one*, according to the intention and the petition of Christ, can be answered, and the reply can be understood, only in proportion to every man's experience in the realities of spiritual fellowship with Christ and in Christ. But what is specially necessary, too, is to keep close to the *terms* used by our Saviour; and this we will endeavor to do.

Christ prays for those who should believe on him through the word delivered to the world by his inspired apostles. It is, therefore, by *faith in him*, and in the exercise of that faith, that they are one, and intended to be one. Church order and government, creeds, doctrinal views, so far as they are consistent with a living faith in Christ, and the thousand religious differences and preferences of which that faith admits, are left entirely out of the question here. *Uniformity* was infinitely below the horizon of our glorious Saviour, as he, standing upon the elevation of his universal high-priestly office, pleaded with his Father for all the spiritual members of his body, the true universal church of all ages, climates and languages. If, indeed, spiritual *perfection* involves not only oneness in the true faith in Christ, but also sameness of doctrinal conception in all particulars, and uniformity of outward church order and worship, this identity of doctrinal views and external form was left intentionally to the development of successive ages, and will be — yea, *can* be — only the result of that grand ferment of the human mind, more particularly of the believing and sanctified human mind, as embodied in the church universal; of that ferment, I say, which the Word of truth and the Holy Spirit have created, and which they will continue, and urge onward, till Christ shall reign alone, perfectly and forever, on all the earth. But Christ prays



neither for the *uniformity* of his believers, nor for their instantaneous *perfection*. He prays "that they may be *one*, even as we are one." Now, the Father and the Son are one in *nature*, in *character*, in *design*, and in *work*. The unity of true believers does not differ in *kind* from this oneness of the Father and the Son. We are "born of God," "of the Spirit;" and hence, *as believers*, "partakers" of the same "divine nature." Their *character as believers* must be the same in *kind*, however modified or shaded. They are "born of the Spirit" and are "spirit," that is, spiritually-minded, of one central and ultimate *design* of life; and their life and *work must* turn around the same great centre, even Christ, he working in them both to will and to do his good pleasure at last, notwithstanding all the windings and failings involved in the *partial* sanctification of the church *militant*. Again, the oneness of the Father and the Son are, in a certain sense, an *identity*. "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee." The identity of two different persons does not fall within the range of the *ordinary* laws of human thought. Hence, the doctrine of the trinity is a stumbling-block to Unitarians, even when they are led by experience and Scripture to regard Christ as their divine Saviour in the highest sense of that term. Blessed are those who either receive the doctrine in singleness of heart, or else have eyes to see what *overlies* human speculation. There exists no difficulty, however, with regard to the identity of believers, as one organic body. Nor does there exist any in their being thus one with Christ himself. It is not an exaggeration, nor a mere rhetorical figure, when believers are represented in Scripture as members of the same body, animated by the same divine life, moved by the same divine spirit, destined for the same eternal relation to and union with Christ,—as forming unitedly

“his body,” who is “Head over all things,” to be forever “the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” (Eph. 1 : 22, 23.) There is here as much sobriety of truth as transcending elevation and soul-enrapturing glory. Once more, their “fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ;” but with the Father *only*, and *forever*, through the Son. “I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.” On this sentiment I need not enlarge. Suffice it to say that the oneness of believers is once more and strongly characterized here. It consists of the *being of Christ in them*, and thus of the presence of the Father and of the Son in their souls, regenerated and moved by the Spirit of both. And this his presence in them makes them “perfect in one,” according to the view and the prayer of Christ. All else is left out of the question. The realization of growing harmony in doctrinal particulars, or ecclesiastical perfection, was left to the revolving centuries, as their appointed task. All that is to be regretted, in the division existing among Christians on earth, is the division of *heart*, the want of faith, the lack of charity. Those who mourn because those who believe are still divided in church regulations and on some doctrinal points are, as it were, mourning over children of various stature, because they were not born full-grown men and women. Every soul that is one with Christ by faith is “made perfect in one” with his true people on earth, and should have no other care than to illustrate, as well as prove, by universal “love unfeigned” to all true friends of Christ, that there is a bond of perfectness thrown around his body, stronger than death, and more truly precious than all the kindest feelings of man’s unsanctified heart towards his fellow-men.

II. The object which Jesus had in view in all this was

“that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (v. 21), and “that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (v. 23).

“The world,” in this connection, is obviously not the world as consciously arrayed in arms against Jehovah, and against his anointed. Of these he says, “The world hath hated them;” and for the world, in that sense, he does not pray at all (v. 9). The world, in the sense of this passage, are those who, though belonging to the world as yet, are in a recoverable condition; subjects of hope, and, therefore, subjects of Gospel labor, having yet the possibility before them to “believe” and to “know” that the Father sent his Son into the world to save sinners. Hence it is, that although Christ does not positively pray for them, his divine charity sweeps close by them, and a conditional petition, a desire of his heart respecting them, rises to heaven, the effects of which eternity will reveal. The world is to see — this is what he prayerfully desires — in the pious fellowship of believers, both among themselves and with Christ, a proof that there is a divine transforming and sanctifying power clearly discernible in the souls of true believers; a power bearing witness to the great central fact of revelation, namely, that of the manifestation of God in the flesh, and to the reality of the salvation of sinners by the death of Christ. Being at first led by the oneness of Christians with Christ and among themselves, by faith in him, to “believe” these great truths, the world is to experience their transforming power also, and thus to “know” that the Father loved, and will forever love, the redeemed in Christ, and for Christ’s sake, substantially with the same love with which he loves the Son himself, whom, indeed, he actually gave up, a free and voluntary ransom for their souls. Christ in one scale of the balance, the salvation of the



redeemed in the other; the balance in the Father's hand, and his eye and heart upon both scales; and the result was the great work of the redemption of these souls, through the death of the only-begotten of the Father, "that the world may know" that thou "hast loved *them* even as thou hast loved *me*." This divine affection has so direct a reference to the redeemed *personally*, that our Saviour does not hesitate to say, "And I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God" (16 : 26, 27). These are stupendous truths, but they are plainly taught by Christ himself; and "he that hath an ear to hear, let him hear."

A few remarks, and I have done.

1. The inward life of the true believer, his calling, his relations both to the church and to Christ, his present privileges, and his future prospects, are beyond expression elevated. Here is the divine image, though not yet perfectly, still really and unquestionably reinstated into its primitive dignity, to which is added the glory of God manifested in the flesh, and all the splendors of that dying love which God himself "commendeth" as alone worthy of that name in its highest sense. The believer's life is the life of God in him; his calling, a constantly growing conformity to Christ, the King of glory, whom all the heavens adore, and whose nod the universe obeys; his relation to Christ is personal and intimate; that to the body of believers, sweet and profitable, and a great blessing to a perishing world. His present privileges are limited only by the exercise of his own faith, a fulness of grace and of truth. His future prospects are a seat with Christ in his exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

2. Harmony in Christ, and the most expansive fraternal



charity, are as solemn a duty to every believer as they are a high privilege and a precious blessing. They are a most important means of grace to those whom "the Lord our God shall call." Let those who love Christ see that they abound in brotherly love, in love unfeigned, lest the blood of soul be found in their hands at the last day!

3. Christian union, in its proper sense, has always existed, and will always exist, among those who truly know Christ. Not that believers have no reason to be deeply humbled, in view of their great short-coming in this grace; they are, at least in our days, deplorably cold and heartless, in cases without number. Nor will all of his loveless professors of religion be found to have been Christians at the last day. But it remains true, notwithstanding, that the fellowship of Christians *is* the sweetest in the world, and bears the clear impress of its divine origin. Those who strive for *uniformity*, instead of *union*, among Christians, need not wonder at the small success of their efforts. Christ has no sympathy with them, nor ever prayed for *their* success. Let them settle their accounts with our text as best they can, comparing diligently Paul's great chapter on charity, or love, 1 Cor. 13.

## VII.

### THE GREAT DEMAND.

Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am ; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. — JOHN 17 : 24.

Now Christ has done with *that* part of his great intercessory prayer which relates to the earthly condition and career of his disciples, and their work here below. . Now he soars beyond the sky, and finishes his petitions on their behalf in the highest realms of that “ eternal weight of glory ” which no eye hath seen, nor ear heard, and which hath not entered into the heart of man here below.

But the expressions “ intercessory prayer ” and “ petition,” which I have just used, are no more properly applicable in the remaining three verses of this chapter. So elevated is the ground which Jesus now takes, in speaking to his Father, that none else but the eternal and equal Son could have spoken thus, without blasphemous presumption. In approaching, therefore, the contemplation of our text, I shall have to speak of the *Great DEMAND* which our Saviour made; and, more particularly,

I. OF THE DIGNITY OF ITS CHARACTER.

II. OF THE ABODE AND THE ENJOYMENTS IT SECURES TO BELIEVERS.

I. Hitherto, Christ has *prayed* to his Father for his more

immediate disciples, and for all believers. *His* prayer was, however, not like *our* prayers. It was resplendent with the glory of the only-begotten of the Father. Never man prayed like him. Every breath was an eternal reality. Of him it might have been said, he prayed and it was. Still, what he uttered thus far in this chapter was in the form of *prayer*, and intentionally so. But *now*, drawing near the close, he takes the highest ground that can be taken,—ground that can be taken by him alone who is, not a son, but *the* Son of the Father. He wills ! He might have kept up to the end of the chapter the form of *petition*, and his object of securing to believers the intended blessings would have been equally secured. He would have run no risk of being denied. But he chooses, no doubt purposely, to utter a *decision*, to indulge in an act of his personal *will* ; and that in an address to the Majesty of heaven, and on one of the most elevated and important subjects conceivable, namely, the eternal abode and bliss of all believers.

The will of every created moral being in the universe, sustaining a proper relation to the Creator, is entirely dependent upon the sovereign will of God, even in the smallest possible concerns. The subordination of such a sanctified but finite will to the absolute will is a self-evident moral duty, and the weight and measure of every volition which is in harmony with the universal law of holiness. It is felt, and willingly and conscientiously expressed, by all right-feeling moral agents, in every suitable way ; but especially by believers on earth, and most particularly when they are engaged in prayer to Him who “doeth according to *his will* in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth ; whose hand none can stay, and to whom none can say, What doest thou ?”

But, notwithstanding this, here Jesus *wills*, simply and positively, and that with reference to the most momentous, eternal concern, disposing in favor of his disciples of the highest realm of glory ; and he expresses that will in a direct address to his Father, and still he meets with no frown.

This opens before us an important field of meditation, upon which, though we cannot enter it, we shall have to bestow a few thoughts indispensable for our present purpose. The life of Jesus exhibits a two-fold stream of moral being and agency, both penetrating each other, and blending with each other in indissoluble and free harmony, as constituting the one life of one and the same matchless individuality ; — the one of these two life-currents being human, dependent and submissive ; the other, divine, sovereign, and absolutely free. This life of Christ, thus constituted, was, to his last breath, partly vicarious or meritorious for us *towards God*, and partly a *pattern* for our imitation. So far as these two weighty objects of his earthly career went, he exhibited the most perfect, holy dependence and reliance upon the sovereign pleasure of the Father. “And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me ; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” Do we need further proof ? But that life of the most perfect, holy dependence and reliance upon the sovereign pleasure of the Father, was the life of the *Eternal Son* manifested in the flesh ; and, whenever there was no occasion either for vicarious obedience or for an example of holy obedience, the Son could assume his divine prerogatives, and show forth his divine glory. And, moreover, as we cannot rely on any but a *divine* Saviour, it was indispensable for our salvation that we should know, believe and realize, this great fact ; and therefore we do behold rays of divine majesty beam



forth from the life of the despised man of sorrows, and the meek and lowly Jesus makes no effort to hide them. "The Father worketh hitherto," he says, "and *I* work." "Before Abraham was, *I am*." "If ye believe not that *I am he*, ye shall die in your sins." "*I will*, be thou clean." "As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, *even so* the Son quickeneth whom *he will*." "All men should honor the Son *even as they honor the Father*." "I and my Father are one." And now, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am."

The right of Jesus to indulge and to express a positive *individual will*, even with regard to so momentous a question as the eternal abode and condition of his people, rests upon his *divine character*. And that *will* was *sovereign*, and its exercise *safe*, without either infringing upon the *unity* of the Supreme Being, or endangering the order and the happiness of the moral universe, because of the essential and eternal union of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, in the one eternally undivided Trinity, of whose Persons one is like all, all like one, in divine perfection, dignity and right.

Thus the demand of Christ respecting the eternal abode and condition of his people is clothed with the dignity of those decisions and decrees which emanate from the infallible and sovereign council of the Supreme Being. What he asks for, or wills, is unfailingly the will of the Divine Mind, and secured, though heaven and earth pass away.

II. But what abode does Christ thus provide for his disciples? "That they" "whom thou hast given me be with me, *where I am*."

"Where shall I be after death?" is a very serious question. The Christian answers, "In heaven." But where is heaven! Above the blue sky, which is but empty air

and space, or else in some happy region of distant stars? Am I to be transferred, in the twinkling of an eye, to inconceivable distances from this earth? My heart recoils at the thought! Is eternity a kind of *time*, and heaven a *place*, or are they together expressive of a state of mind? Where shall my anxious eye find a sure repose, my restless soul a resting-place, in this stupendous inquiry? But “why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me?” Thou shalt be *where Christ is*. This removes every anxious thought, and pours over my prospect celestial though incomprehensible light, and into my soul sweet confidence and profoundest peace.

But where is Christ? — Here we must remember that a direct conception from the actual experience of this great subject is not the privilege of mortal man. No eye hath seen and no ear hath heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what God has prepared for those that love him. Hence human language has no terms for those realities, save figurative ones. It is also to be realized that, however condescending God may be towards those who love him, and however *intimate*, even, with some of them, he can never cease to be *alone* and *forever* a sovereign God, matchless in his being and his attributes; and that, however elevated the station of a created spirit be made, however high his privilege or glorious his moral likeness to his Maker may become, as eternity rolls on, he can never cease to be a finite and dependent creature, infinitely removed from *that* state of being which is the exclusive privilege of the Eternal God.

With these cautions in full view, we are prepared to ask the two-fold question, “Where is the abode of Christ, and of his disciples in glory?”

Jesus says to his Father, “I come unto thee” (verses 11,

13). He returned to the glory which he had with the Father, before the world was (verse 5). He calls this glorious abode his Father's house, in which are many mansions, and to which he himself will transport his own when they die; that they may be *where he is* (14: 23). He ascended up *on high*, leading captivity captive. And whither did he ascend? Paul answers, "*Far above* all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and *every name* that is named (of created dignities), not only in this world, but *also in that which is to come.*" (Eph. 1: 21.) Says the Eternal Father to his victorious Son, "Sit thou at *my right hand*, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (Ps. 110: 1.) And the Son says, if not to all his followers, at any rate to some who remain firm and faithful in certain peculiar trials of faith, "To him that overcometh I will grant *to sit with me in my throne*, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." (Rev. 3: 21.) "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." (21: 7.)

According to these passages, the disciples of Jesus are not merely to dwell in wide, blissful realms in heaven, sitting, perhaps, with angels, or waiting upon seraphs, or bearing an inferior though happy part in the celestial choirs led on by archangels and principalities; but they are to be in the peculiar and personal nearness of Jesus enthroned in glory; near to him in a sense in which no other inhabitants of heaven enjoy the privilege. They dwell in *his Father's house, with Christ*, as the Levites used to live in the earthly house of God, in chambers leaning directly upon the walls of the house, and encircling in closest contact both the Sanctuary and the Holy of holies, their habitations being with these holy places under *one roof*. On earth they were themselves "a building fitly framed together," "an holy temple in the Lord," "an



habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2: 21, 22); there they will live in closest contact with Jesus, where he is in that peculiarly privileged realm or state termed his Father's house; or, on still higher ground, his Father's and his throne. This latter conception is altogether too much for human nature; shrinking, as it must, before this burst of glory, in view of its own nothingness and vileness. Notwithstanding, faith rallies again, and, obedient to the Word of God, confesses that the merits of our Divine Saviour are sufficient to effect even *that*; and that, so far as Christ is "the *head* over all *to the church*," and the church "his body, the *fulness* of *him*, that (according to his divine nature) filleth all in all" (Eph. 1. 22, 23); there appears to be no other appropriate place for the members of his body than upon his throne. This appears to be Scripture truth, expressed in figurative terms, but in sober and true ones, not in hyperboles and exaggeration. But what the *realities* themselves will reveal to the sight and the senses of those who in yonder world shall "see face to face," and know as also they are known,—with what dignity it will clothe them, and what pure raptures it will pour into their enlarged spirits,—these are questions to which there is no direct reply, short of heaven itself. But what is revealed should be well considered, and received by faith.

Jesus says they should *behold his glory which the Father has given him*. Said the Queen of Sheba to Solomon, "Happy are thy men, and happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom." (2 Chr. 9: 7.) "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," says John; "but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, *for we shall see him as he is*." (1 John 3: 2.) And the same apostle testifies, "And



the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the *Lamb* is the light thereof." (Rev. 21 : 23.) The glory of God consists of the radiance which the *Lamb* shall shed over the celestial city.

This will, indeed, be a beholding of that glory of Christ which the Father gave him, and which is identical with his own glory.

The beholding of this glory of the *Lamb* involves a *sight of Jesus in his glory*. That glory is the manifestation of the divine perfections through the humanity of Christ to the church,—that is, through a medium adapted to her human but now sanctified and enlarged means, and organs of perception and experience. Yet, that adaptation implies no detriment to the divine perfections *as displayed* "in the face of Jesus Christ," for humanity *itself* was created in the *divine image*, and is in its original formation calculated upon a right and adequate appreciation of the divine perfections.

The beholding of that glory involves a *near* sight of Christ. All that might be called distance, creating indistinctness of vision, or allowing the intrusion of other objects, is intentionally put out of the question. It involves, therefore, a *true* sight. We shall see him *as* he is. The light that bursts from the *Lamb* of God is his own glory and his Father's. It is not reflected light, neither do we get it by reflection from other objects, nearer to him than we. Neither is it refracted, or discolored, or changed by sheets of created atmospheres intervening. If ever, here below, "God" "shined into our hearts," to give us the knowledge of his own glory, "*in the face of Jesus Christ*," how much more there! Nothing will tarnish the expression of his blessed countenance.

It involves an *adequate power of vision on our part*. We shall see him as he is. Here our spiritual sight operates as "through a glass darkly;" there it will be "*face to face*." Here we know in part; there *we shall know* even as also we *are known*. Here our ideas and our expressions respecting "heavenly things" are all *figurative*. There our perception will be direct, and by senses fitted to perceive the objects, without resorting to figures and symbolic substitutes. So likewise will be our ideas respecting them, and so our language,—all direct, liberal, adequate. Our enjoyment will correspond to the reality and the directness of our impressions and our knowledge. Not as though any creature could ever have a knowledge of God *adequate in extent* (if I may so speak), for God *cannot* be found unto perfection. But our knowledge of Christ and of God will be *adequate* as to *truthfulness* and *reality*; our impressions corresponding to the object directly, and, as far as they go, fully. But it will be even in *extent* all that we can ever conceive of, realize or enjoy; all that our ever-growing faculties will ever be able to grasp and to drink in, in streams of the divine perfections radiating from "the face of Jesus Christ."

A sight so near involves the hearing of his blessed voice, and an eternal relation of holy and devout intimacy with him. "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." This will be their welcome to his presence. And is this *first* word to be the *last* they will ever hear him speak? Are their ears henceforth to be deaf to the matchless harmony of his voice, or too far removed to catch the rapturous sound again? And will he never speak to them again, after that first welcome? Will he be too much occupied with the concerns of other worlds, stars and galaxies, to speak comfortably to those for

whose souls he gave his soul, and whose life he snatched with bleeding hands from the horrible pit? — The supposition is preposterous. No, indeed! His people will “hear” his “wisdom,” and be charmed with the very accents of his love, while he is feeding them “among the lilies” of yon blissful world, and leading them “unto the living fountains of water.” (Cant. 6 : 3. Rev. 7 : 17.) They will hear him speak with divine authority to the angels, the swift messengers of his vast empire, and with tenderest affection, peculiar and personal, to themselves, who are the purchase of his blood, the inmates of his Father’s house, the sharers of his glory, his “joint-heirs,” the members of his body, the gems of his mediatorial crown.

But the prominent feature, the central ray, of the divine perfections, as revealed through Christ, will be that of free sovereign grace, and dying love for sinners. “The *Lamb* is the light thereof.” Whatever revelations of himself it may please God to make to other worlds, *this* revelation belongs to us,—*free grace and dying love*. This is what *we* need, what *we* love to see *nearest*, what *we* shall wish to view, of what *we* shall desire to sing *forever*. As *our* spiritual vision is set, the very universe, *viewed through THIS medium*, is clothed in a rainbow of peace, and shines in unutterable beauty and majesty, as the work of the Father of lights and of mercies, created by him who loved us and gave himself for us.

This is the enjoyment which Christ has destined for his people; and of the full consent of the Father to this his will and decision *he is as sure as he is of the Father’s eternal love to him*. — “FOR *thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world*.”

I close with a few remarks.

1. Believers in Jesus, you see here what is just before you, there being but a step between you and this eternal weight of glory ; and can it be hard for you to forsake all for Christ, and to make yourselves a whole burnt-offering upon his altar ? Away with everything the world can offer you, either to endanger, or even to diminish, your share in that blessed kingdom of your Saviour ! Never lose sight of a heaven so sure to believers, and so blissful.

2. Yes ; so sure. *Christ has decided that you shall be where he is.* And who will turn the sovereign decision of his loving, faithful heart, and his divine will and word, uttered at that hour, in the hearing of heaven, earth and hell ?

3. Sinners, as great as the glory is which you reject, so great will be the ruin which you bring upon yourselves. Now be warned, and flee from the wrath to come,— the wrath already *near*,— lest ere long you shall be seen amid despairing, wretched souls, calling on the mountains and the rocks, and saying, “ Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb ; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand ? ”



## VIII.

### THE ETERNAL DESTINY.

O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee ; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it ; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them. — JOHN 17 : 25, 26.

THUS our blessed Saviour closes this matchless prayer. For, “when Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron” (John 18 : 1). In the sentiments uttered thus far, and aside from their intercessory character, Christ had poured consolation into the souls of his disciples in divine fulness ; and matter for future reflection was communicated to them in the most solemn circumstances, well calculated to engross, in all ages, the devout attention of the church. Now, in these two closing verses, there is in part a last reference to the most important practical truths to which their minds had just been called, and partly, and chiefly, indeed, there is *progress*,—a progress, as we might expect it at this moment, “entering into that within the vail,” and melting with the glory of a blissful eternity to come. This will appear, I trust, in the course of this our last Meditation on the chapter which I have endeavored to so unfold to my hearers.

We are now called to contemplate *the eternal destiny of believers*, and more particularly

## I. THE PREPARATION FOR IT.

## II. ITS ETERNAL REALIZATION.

In speaking on these two topics, as my main points, I beg leave so to extend my remarks as to embody also the other important terms of my text.

I. In the observations I made on verse three of this chapter, I endeavored to show what is the experimental *knowledge* of "the only true God," and of *his Son* whom he hath sent; and *how* this knowledge is *eternal life*. Such a knowledge of God and of Christ we were obliged to deny to those who are *without*. For, although we readily granted that they possess *a kind* of knowledge concerning God and Christ, still we saw that that is a knowledge not unto salvation, but unto judgment.

Our Saviour goes further still, in this place. He denies to the world more than the *experimental* knowledge of the Father. "The world knoweth thee not." Is this contradictory to other Scripture sentiments? — No.

Paul, speaking of the manifestations which God made of himself to the heathen world at large, and which he is still making to each heathen mind in particular, by the works of creation, concludes that they *know God*, whose eternal power and godhead are "clearly seen" and "understood" "by the things that are made," "so that they are without excuse." Still, he maintains, that when they "*became* vain in their imaginations," "their foolish heart was darkened," and that "they *became fools*;" and he feels authorized to say of the "Gentiles," in another place, that "they know not God." (1 Thess. 4: 5.) Yea, more. The Jews were possessed of all *revealed* knowledge of God, existing eighteen hundred years ago; and still, Christ says of some of their most learned men; "They have not known the Father nor me" (John

16: 3); and he charges them publicly, saying, "My Father," "of whom ye say that he is your God," "ye have not known" (8: 54, 55). From these passages we may learn that the knowledge of God, derived from the works of creation, or of providence, or even from his *written revelation*,—all obtained, however, in the exercise of our natural powers,—is, indeed, sufficient for the basis of an eternal moral accountability to God; and is capable, too, of being kindled into a living knowledge of God and of Christ, by the heaven-sent ray of inward experience. Still, if that experimental element be rejected, and the naturally acquired knowledge of God left to itself, it will soon and certainly be distorted and darkened by adverse influences, or judicially removed; and, at last, extinguished in every practical and available view, so as to be no more worthy, in any sense, of being called a *knowledge of God*. And so it is with nations, and with individuals. Ask the heathens, ancient and modern,—ask the Jews and the various kinds of Deists, and all who sympathize with them, what is the character of God, and their answer will oblige you to say, whatever correct knowledge they may once have possessed, *now* they do not know God. Their God is an imaginary being, an idol of human fiction. Or, ask the dying infidel the same question, and your conclusion will be, that, whatever other valuable information this poor soul may have had once, at the close of a life of unbelief no true knowledge of the character of God has remained, to support or to direct the departing spirit in the trying hour of death. In short, the knowledge which the world has of God is rather a knowledge *concerning* him, not a knowledge *of* him. Derived, in the exercise of our natural powers, from causes outside of us, it is apt to be perverted or scattered by the same causes and influences; and unless pervaded, quick-

ened and sanctified, by the Divine Spirit, it is sure to set in darkness at the last expiring breath;—but it sets only to rise again on the other side of the grave, to pour its once abused, now peering and insufferable light, upon the culprit's guilt, and to kindle in his soul the fires of eternal self-condemnation. Thus the world has a knowledge *concerning* God; but *himself* they know not, and they “die without knowledge.”

But there is a still more specific sense in which Christ uses the terms here, when he says, “Righteous Father, the world hath not known thee.” It is indicated by the two terms “righteous Father.” They are chosen with precision and emphasis. They are the very poles of the divine character. The term “righteous” designates that attribute of God which leads him unalterably to do and to require that which is morally right, or holy. “The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.” (Ps. 145: 17.) “Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.” (Lev. 19: 2.) The term “Father” marks the attribute of his *love*. “God is love.” He hath no pleasure in the death of the sinner; but, on the contrary, *so* loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son for sinners.

Now, the world practically deny his *righteousness*, by neither believing in the reality of his holy law nor bowing to the thunders of his threatened vengeance. They cannot believe that the law of God should be as strict as the Bible makes it, and the scriptural view of the corruption of human nature they consider slanderous. They deny his *love* by rejecting Christ, whose atonement they treat as needless. *Their* God is, therefore, neither righteous nor benevolent. He is not, himself, holy in all his works; nor does he require holiness of his moral creatures; nor is he as emphatically



love as the Bible teaches. "*Righteous Father*, the world hath not known thee." How true !

"But I have known thee," Christ adds ; and, with this single expression, places our feet upon an eminence, down from which the ignorance of God, in which the world is lying, appears most awful. For, if *that* knowledge which Christ has of the "righteous Father" is, *in any sense*, attainable by the world, and consequently the absence of it chargeable to their contumelious neglect of this inestimable acquisition, *how deep* must their ignorance of God appear in this light ! *how black* their guilt, *how terrible* their just and inevitable doom !

"But I have known thee," "righteous Father," "and I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it." Here is the promise of Christ, that he will communicate to his disciples, in ever-growing measure, that knowledge of the "righteous Father" which he himself possesses, and which the world does not enjoy, nor can receive.

When Christ testifies (Matt. 11 : 27) that no one (*οὐδεὶς*) "knoweth the Father, save the Son," he evidently speaks of a *kind* of knowledge *peculiar to the Son*, and excluding from it all men and angels, as such. "Not that any one (*οὐχ-τις*) hath seen the Father, save he which is of God : he *hath* seen the Father." (John 6 : 46.) And this his knowledge is of an *absolutely divine* character. "As the Father knoweth me, *even so* know I the Father" (10 : 15). These two magnitudes cover each other. "No one (*οὐδεὶς*) hath seen God at any time," says John (1 : 18). For He is "the King eternal, immortal, *invisible*, the only wise God," says Paul (1 Tim. 1 : 17) ; "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords ; who only hath immortality, dwelling in inapproachable light, whom no

man *hath seen*, nor *can see*, to whom be honor and power everlasting, amen." (6 : 16.) Only *the* Son, he *has* seen the Father.

But Christ intimates that the knowledge he possesses of the Father he *may reveal*, and that especially to *men*; and that they can receive and possess the knowledge thus revealed to them by Christ, saying, "And he (knoweth the Father) to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." (Matt. 11 : 27.) And John, speaking of the invisibility of the Divine Being, adds, that "the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath *brought out*" from thence (not merely "declared"), what from eternity was his exclusive privilege to see and to know "of the Father." (John 1 : 18.)

Now, what knowledge may we suppose Christ possessed of the *righteous Father*, or, in other words, of the holiness and the goodness of him to whom he sustains the divine and eternal relation of "the brightness of his glory," and the express image of his person, — that of the "Son," the creative "Word" and power by whom he "made the worlds," and who is now "upholding all things (that is, the universe) by the word of his power"? (Heb. 1 : 2, 3.)

The knowledge Christ possesses of the "righteous Father" must be estimated, first, by his *capacity to know him*. That capacity, be it remembered, is absolutely *divine*, boundless, perfect, and in every respect entirely adequate to the unbounded object. "The Word" which *became flesh* "*was God*," and was "*with God*." Himself "over all God, blessed forever," he was in eternal fellowship with the Father, capable of knowing the Father by a kind of self-knowledge or consciousness. The conclusion is, that the divine consciousness of the Father himself does not surpass the knowledge of the Son concerning him.

That knowledge must be estimated further by the eternal, perfect harmony of purpose, counsel and operation, existing between the Father and the Son, whether it be *within* the unexplored depths of the Divine Mind, "before the world was," or *abroad*, in *time*, in the vast circumference of created being.

I said above that the Son knew the Father with a *kind of self-knowledge*, and this expression is appropriate so long as we consider the separate personality of both. But when, lastly, we consider their identity as one God, and the only true God with either Spirit, we must also consider the consciousness and the knowledge of each *identical* with that of the other, or the others, their personality still remaining untouched and unconfounded. The bearing of this consideration upon the knowledge of Christ concerning the Father is plain.

What, then, must *that* knowledge be, especially as it regards the Father's *holiness*, and his *love*? *Holiness*, an adamant rock overtowering equally creation's highest star and the loftiest seraph-thought, and burning with hundred thousand lightnings against all sin, wherever throughout the boundless universe it shows its rebel front; *love*, a depth *fathomless* as eternity, and instinct with feelings of yearning compassion, with living and life-giving thoughts of peace, and schemes of benevolence, preparing bliss and glory such as no eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived. *Holiness* and *love*, at variance in their separate bearings upon the eternal destiny of a fallen world, were reconciled and combined by divine wisdom, and brought into liveliest and intensest exercise in the atonement made by the Son, each finding, on *that* ground, its claims responded to, and its requirements met, in the most perfect and glorious manner; and thus the



knowledge of the Father and the Son concerning each other, based from eternity upon omniscience and joint consciousness, acquired (if I may so speak) from the joint *work* of redemption that which is the peculiar result of *work* and *action*, as distinct from conception and purpose. For the perfection of the Divine Mind does not consist in an eternal and perfect sameness of stationary perfection, but in inward vitality and outstreaming action, rolling one sea of glory upon the other, to the ends of creation; and this process cannot be considered an unavailing or barren one to the Divine Mind itself. Thus it must be with the work of redemption, the greatest of all the works of God; and, that being done, Christ could say, in the fullest sense conceivable to us, that the Father knew him, and that he knew the Father. (John 10 : 15.)

Nor was that knowledge of the Son reduced to less adequate conceptions by his self-humiliation into the form of a servant. There was, on the contrary, especial divine provision made, that Jesus, *while on earth*, should possess this knowledge as perfectly as he ever did. In 1 Cor. 2 : 10—12, Paul represents the Spirit of God as entering into all the depths of the Divine Being, searching and *knowing* “the deep things of God;” and then *going out* again, like the divine breath, to reveal those things to the docile minds of believers, according to the measure of their faith, and their various capacities. That Spirit, with all “the deep things of God” of which he is the bearer, was given to Jesus *without measure*. (John 3 : 34.) But “the deep things of God” were already and equally Christ’s. They needed not be *given* to him on his own account, but on *ours*. “All things that the Father hath *are* mine,” says Christ (John 16 : 15); “therefore, I said, that he shall take of *mine*, and show it unto you.” The uninterrupted connection of Jesus with the celes-



tial world he himself affirms, by telling his disciples that they would see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. (John 1: 51.) But, again, lest they should think that he, while here below, really needed a medium of communication between his Father and himself, he declares that his descent into *this* world has not removed him, *in every sense*, from the heavenly world; his *presence here* involved no *entire absence from there*. He calls himself "the Son of Man which *is* in heaven," while actually standing on earth and speaking to men. About the same time, he declared, unhesitatingly, "The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him *all things* that himself doeth." (John 5: 20.) And just before his death, "I am in the Father, and the Father in me" (14: 11); and the whole is summed up in the words of Jesus, in whom "dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead *bodily*" (Col. 2: 9), when he, as the Son of Man, says, in the face of his enraged enemies, "I and my Father are one" (John 10: 30).

"But I have known thee," he says. O yes, and that in the highest sense. "And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it," he adds. The knowledge he possesses of the "righteous Father's" name he communicates to his disciples, and will constantly and increasingly communicate. As far as *his ability* and *his willingness* to reveal it are concerned, there are no limits to the available divine knowledge within our reach, till we are "filled with all the fulness of God," — that is, of the knowledge and enjoyment of him. We, ourselves, are our only limits. We are straitened in our own bowels, not in Christ.

This promise of Christ accounts for all the overwhelming views which some believers have had of the holiness and the goodness of God, and for all the unutterable sense of heavenly

sweetness they have enjoyed, in the love of God, and of Christ. These are but the promised communications, in an incipient state, of the knowledge of the "righteous Father" revealed by Jesus. Incipient, I say, for it is obvious that the great promise we are contemplating will be carried forward in an eternal course of fulfilment. What the most privileged Christian ever saw here is but the dawn of that "perfect day" in heaven which awaits every child of God.

II. But let it not be supposed, for a moment, that, in the realization of these blessed purposes, the redeemed and sanctified soul is ever to become independent of Jesus, or separate from him. He is the Alpha, and he the Omega. This our Saviour intimates by closing with these words, "that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

The obvious import of this concluding sentiment is, that the communications made by Christ to his followers, of the name of the "righteous Father," are to fit them for receiving into their hearts, for cultivating and enjoying, *that same love* with which the Father loveth the Son, and the Son the Father, their love being reciprocal and one. This love, centering in God, they are to receive and cherish, experiencing (1) its infinite and unspeakable sweetness, thus being made partakers of the divine *bliss*, as they were here below of the divine *nature* (2 Pet. 1: 4), and *both in Christ*; and (2) its *transforming power*, drawing them constantly and forever into closer fellowship with God, so that, while they are "with open face beholding" "the glory of the Lord," they "are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

But their connection with Christ is eternal. As their *life of faith* here below was but the life of Christ in them, so

their life in glory will be but the life of the glorified Son of the Father in them, and that to eternal ages. He is their head, they are "his body, the fulness of him (Christ) that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1: 30). They are indissolubly connected with him *as his body*, and this their connection with him attaches also to *that* nature in him *by the which* he "filleth all in all," they being called "his fulness" with reference to it. Therefore, Christ closes the whole prayer with the weighty sentence, "And I in them."

This is the ultimate and eternal object, the realization of the whole scheme of redemption. Here salvation finds its *centre*, and, therefore, its *rest*,—a rest without rest, a rest involving eternal progress. Jesus is to the believer the beginning *and* the *end*, because himself *endless*. The distance between the absolute Godhead and the highest creature must forever be *infinite*. And who can, in any sense, fill that infinite distance, but God himself, descending to man, and raising humanity into union with himself, and to a participation of his enjoyment, according to the measure of his own grace and glory in Christ, and the ever-expanding capacities of the soul created in the divine image, and redeemed by the blood of the Son of God? This has been done for us, in Christ!

"And I in them,"—and that forever. Cast your eye of faith beyond the lapse of time, into eternal glory, and, if the words of Jesus needed confirmation, you would get it there. Once he has taken upon himself our nature, and has become the atoning sacrifice for our sins; and he will keep *this character* forever, and with it his humanity. He in them, and they in him, is the end of the atonement, the crown of his redemption. And this end, when realized, will be so glorious, that not only the redeemed, but every creature



which is in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, will give him everlasting praise, saying, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and *unto the Lamb for ever and ever.*" (Rev. 5: 13.) "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of water." They will "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple" of the holy city, their habitation, and "the glory of God doth lighten it, and *the Lamb is the light thereof;*" while the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal," will flow in eternal fulness out of the throne of God and *of the Lamb.*

"And I in them!" Amen, we reply. Here we are willing to rest, here build our tabernacles; for it is good to be here. Christ, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily, dwelling in us in yonder world, secures to us the equal and everlasting indwelling of the Father and the Spirit; while he who wears our nature will ever be the endearing *cause* and *medium* of every ray of light that will bless us, and of every river of bliss that will pour into our ravished souls.

And, now, if there be an unconverted, careless soul here, let me once more speak to you. Again, standing between you and the bottomless pit, I must and *will* ask you, Whither are you hastening? From what love and glory do you turn away, and to what vile sink of sin and hate, to what gulf of despair, woe and wrath, are you rushing? Rejecting Christ, you reject all; and your loss and ruin will be as great as the gain and the bliss of those who will live with him in everlasting union and glory. May he who can turn the heart of stone to flesh turn you to himself!



Christians, followers of the despised Jesus, behold once more the hope of your calling ! Human language is bankrupt on this ground, and our very souls are oppressed with the faint and distant view of this “ eternal weight of glory ” “ which shall be revealed in us.” But so it is. Divine benevolence has so purposed and ordained, a divine Saviour has realized the Godlike scheme,—and our sins and hell itself cannot alter it. Now, let the love of God have the entire and eternal possession of our whole souls,—let us drink in the unspeakable bliss, and lay down all the glory of it at the feet of him that sitteth upon the throne, and at the feet of the Lamb ! Amen.

Deserted of God

In whose light we see Light.

3. Giveth Power to the saint - Ex 4.

4. Power of God in Weakness -

5. Cross real beginning of Human His.

6. of earths real Hero

7. Power of Satan broken by death

8. Songs of Heaven.

9. Sitting in darkness

10. Free from the wrath to come

11. Pharisee

12. ye are clean but not all.

13. after this life



Died 123

Lamb slain





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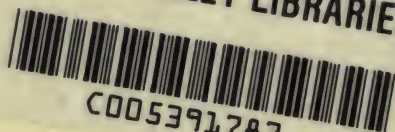
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